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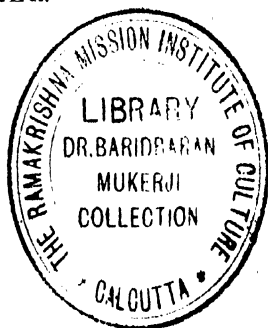
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A YEAR IN INDIA

BY

ANTHONY GEORGE SHIELL.



Esta he por certo a terra, que buscaís,
Da verdadeira Índia, que apparece.

CAMOENS.

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A YEAR IN INDIA.



CHAPTER I.

A PRELIMINARY CANTER.

IT was about the end of August 1875. The Summer Assizes of the Northern Circuit were drawing to a close. At the last dinner at the judges' lodgings the time-honoured toast of *Cras animarum* had been given. In the Bar Library of St. George's Hall, Liverpool, Murray's handbooks and Continental Bradshaws were usurping the place of those legal indispensables, Bullen and Leake and Roscoe's *Nisi Prius*. Everbody was discussing where they should go for the eagerly-awaited Long Vacation. Whether to the English Lakes, the grouse moors of Scotland, or the farther a-field Pyrenees. Changes had taken

place. I was not going to the old grey tower, by the cold Northern Sea, where so many a former vacation had been so happily spent. The dread incubus of India was upon me. I had never seen Switzerland; and, as I felt I might never have the chance again, I decided to go there.

Running up to town, and putting a few things together in my dingy chambers in the Temple, I took the night express, *via* Dover and Calais, to Paris. The day—as I had not been there since the Franco-German war—I spent in regretfully viewing the ravages of the Commune, as exhibited by the Tuileries and in the Rue de Rivoli. In the evening I drove to the Chemin de Fer de Lyon, and took the train for Geneva. Night saw us traversing broad level meadows with meandering streams, lined with tall silvery poplars. When the morning sun shone out, we were speeding by the deep narrow gorges through which the arrowy Rhone wings its rapid flight to the sea. Arrived at the prim little capital of Calvinism and chronometers, and after a comfortable breakfast at the Hotel de

Russie, I embarked in one of the little steamers to sail up the lake to Villeneuve. Ploughing the pale blue waters of Lemman, I chanced suddenly to cast my eyes high upwards, and in the far distance, overtopping all his neighbours, beheld a broad white dome standing out in bold relief against the central blue. It admitted of no doubt. It could be none other than the Monarch of Mountains. There was his "throne of rocks," about him his "robe of clouds," and glittering in mid-heaven his "diadem of snow."

I had come to Switzerland intending merely to sail up the Lake of Geneva, to trundle across the Brünig in a diligence, and to ascend the Rigi by the railway. Mountaineering had been no part of my programme. I had always scoffed at Alpine climbing as but the outcome of foolhardy vanity. In an instant all was changed. I had resolved, at whatever hazard, to set my foot upon its topmost snows. That irresistible longing which, on other occasions since then, in the presence of mountains to which Mont Blanc is but a pigmy, I have fruitlessly

felt, then took possession of me for the first time—to reach those ideal heights and breathe their serene atmosphere of purity and peace, and for a space, however brief, be removed from the petty turmoil and vexation of the fretful world so far beneath.

Continuing our sail, we passed in succession those charming townlets of the lake, nestling along their crescent bays, and made classical for ever by association with the men and women of genius who have sojourned within them, and there produced their works of fame. Coppet, with de Staël and Corinne; Lausanne, with Gibbon and the *Decline and Fall*; “Sweet Clarens,” with Rousseau and the *nouvelle Héloïse*, and all around us the poet of Childe Harold. After passing the Castle of Chillon, covering its rocky islet, we arrived at Villeneuve, where I spent the night. Next morning early I took the train to Vernayaz, whence, after a peep at the Gorge de Trient, I set out to walk over to Chamounix. The shades of evening were already falling as I entered the little Alpine township. I at once proceeded to the Bureau du Guide

Chef, and presented myself to that important functionary, telling him that I wished to ascend Mont Blanc on the morrow. He asked me if I had ever made an ascent before. I replied that I had never been up anything higher than Largo Law, in the kingdom of Fife, of which, to my surprise, he had apparently never heard. However, after a rapid survey, he pronounced me equal to the enterprise. I inquired if there was any party which I could join. He said there were one or two up on the mountain just then, but the season was getting late, it was unusually cold, and he did not expect any more. So alone I resolved to do it. We made an appointment to meet my head guide there later on in the evening. Accordingly, after dinner at the Hotel and Pension Couttet—that snug and admirable hostel which has provided for the last sleep of so many successful escaladers of Mont Blanc—I mean the last sleep before beginning the ascent—I turned up again at the Bureau. I found my head guide waiting, a dapper brisk little Frenchman, very sanguine and

full of encouragement—a climber at heart, but a cobbler by trade; with him I went to his shop, where, while he drove great nails into my boots, his wife equipped me with warm mitts, thick socks, flannel gaiters, a blue gauze silk veil, a pair of lunettes, more familiarly called goggles, and an alpenstock. It was arranged that he should come round for me next morning at nine o'clock, and after many *Bon soir madames*, *Bon soir monsieurs*, and *Dormez biens*, we parted cordially for the night. On my return to the Pension, I took up, before turning in, that Bible of the Alps—*Ball's Alpine Guide*, of which, of course, there were several lying about, to post myself on the subject of my expedition. I cannot say that what I found there had a particularly reassuring effect. That authority says that, of late years, ascents of Mont Blanc have been of such frequency, that the danger now is, not that its difficulties will be over-estimated, but that they will be underrated. He speaks of several days or weeks of previous training, and the liability of unhabituated persons to suffer severely

from the combined effects of rarefied air and unusual exertion at a great height. I could not help being conscious that all the requisite conditions were wanting in me. I had come straight from close attendance in the tainted atmosphere, physical as well as moral, of the Crown Court at Liverpool, travelling from London to Geneva two nights in succession, and to-morrow I was to attempt Mont Blanc alone. Ball, I confess, sent me to bed a little disquieted, but not one bit shaken. That vague sense of oppression that always attends entering upon the unknown by oneself had hold of me. For once the incubus of India had been driven out by another—the incubus of Mont Blanc. I slept wretchedly all night, dreaming of falling down fathomless abysses of snow and ice into the mouths of alligators on the mud banks of the Hooghly.

Morning, however, found me up betimes. In the little wooden arbour in the garden of the Hotel Couttet, where stands a telescope, I found an old clergyman and his fair young daughter closely

scanning the mountain. I also gazed at it, and with greater eagerness than they, for was it not to be the field of my endeavour? There, far up in Cloudland, on the glacier's edge, one could discern the rocky ridge of the Grands Mulets—the half-way house—where one spends “the night before,” and which is to the summit what Quatre Bras was to Waterloo; while higher still, and higher, right away in the abode of starshine, one could clearly trace the two small flag-posts that marked the apex of the mountain and the goal of one's aspiration. As I swept the mountain from base to summit, draped in perpetual snow, I could not fail to be impressed by the majesty of its proportions, its extended base, its colossal bulk, its broad reposeful dome—no starveling peak or attenuated crest—buttressed by giant heights that are competitors, only because they are in the foreground, while it with sublime reticence recedes into the distance; nor as I gazed could I refuse to own its title to Kingship just. While we were thus engaged viewing the mountain,

my guide—the dapper little Frenchman—a coil of rope over his shoulder, and an ice axe in his hand, appeared upon the scene,* with the *porteur*. Bowing an adieu to the old clergyman and his daughter, to whom I had confided my expedition, and who wished me, the former a successful, the latter a safe ascent, we started off at a sharp, smart pace.

Our path at first lay along a clear rapid stream through small farms and groups of cottages with their cows and goats. As the air of the clear bright morning came keen and fresh to the scent, and the tinkling of the sheep bells fell upon the ear, all depression took flight, giving place to a feeling of exhilaration and buoyancy, which the sense of risk involved served only to heighten. The Alpine Monarch seemed everywhere and to dominate everything, towering up in front of us and above us, so near and yet so far. Again the same ineffable longing filled me to gain its heights divinely calm. Could the bright beams of morning only have been ex-

changed for the shades of night, and for all the world I could have fancied myself "the youth who bore, mid snow and ice, the banner with the strange device."

The first part of the ascent is up a zig-zag bridle-path, through a pine wood, by the side of a deep ravine, down which the moraine from the mountains above carries huge boulders and desolation to the green pastures below. A couple of hours or so of this brought us to the first halting place—the Pavillon de la Pierre Pointue—a little chalet-like inn upon a ledge of rock where the path terminates. Even at this elevation, Chamounix looked far off below, only a church spire visible, while the summit of Mont Blanc appeared higher and more remote than ever.

Here, as there was no object to be gained by arriving early at the Grands Mulets, where, as it was, we should have to spend a long afternoon and evening, we resolved to stay an hour or two and *déjeuner*. In that out-of-the-way spot, it was wonderful the good fare that was set before

us, and how moderate the cost—only 3 francs 75. Here is the menu—a dish of mutton nicely grilled and very tender, potatoes in their skins, a couple of sardines, two boiled eggs, stewed prunes, Gruyère cheese, bread and fresh butter *à discrétion*, a pint of St. Jean, and a cup of coffee. Through a telescope in front of the pavilion, I watched for a long time with much interest a curé, roped between two guides, bravely battling with the deep snows of the lower plateau, but sadly hampered by his clerical petticoats, who was making downwards for the Grands Mulets. I could not help envying him; here was he, all his toils and trials overcome, while all my troubles and difficulties were before me, and very likely I should be unsuccessful in the end.

Reinvigorated by rest and refreshment, we now proceeded to assail the mountain in earnest. The real ascent begins from here. Hitherto we had merely been turning a portion of its flank, but now we attacked it directly in front, by striking right across for the Glacier des Boissons. First of

all the moraine is encountered; and, after about half-an-hour of scrambling up and over the stones and rocks that compose it, one at length reaches the margin of the glacier itself. Before venturing a foot upon it, the process of roping ourselves together is performed. The appearance that the glacier presents is of a field of snow split up in all directions by cracks and rents, and studded with blocks and mounds of ice. Walking over it, hyperborean regions of floes and icebergs insensibly suggested themselves, and at every step one expected to encounter a polar bear or the bones of an Arctic explorer. Here and there occurred vast cavities, with wide chasms at the bottom of them. Down their slippery sides one had to scramble, leap across the yawning mouth, and scale the opposite bank, any stone or portion of ice disengaged by the foot hurtling ominously down the fathomless abyss. The largest demands a ladder to compass it, which the second guide, who now appears upon the scene, provides, and deposits after use at a spot thence named Pierre

à l'Echelle. At another stage of the journey, the leading guide turns round, and says in a whisper, "*Marchez très vite,*" and away we skurry as fast as we can over the broken ground. Just then one is passing beneath the Aiguille du Midi, which is apt to signify the displeasure that even too loud a tone may provoke by an enfilading fire of rocky projectiles. Further on are lofty pinnacles of congealed snow, called seracs, the base of which one has to traverse. These are safe enough in the cold keen air of early morning; but in a melting mood, produced by the rays of the noontide sun, are apt to detach huge fragments from their crests and topple them upon the heads of passers underneath. Finally, and worst of all, progress is barred by three vast gaping crevasses of profoundest depth in the steep slope of the snow, and situated one after the other in close succession. They are bridged by frail, weather-bleached wooden ladders. It is evident, from the extreme caution and anxiety of the guides, that this is a very risky bit. At the

bidding of the head guide, we all sit firmly down, close to the edge of the crevasse, digging our heels and planting our alpenstocks as far as we can drive them into the snow; while he, like a cat after a bird, gingerly climbs the ladder step by step. Once across, he squats down, and fixes himself in like manner, as the second guide in turn ascends the ladder, then I make the experiment, and last of all follows the *porteur*. This is the most obviously dangerous thing in the whole ascent of Mont Blanc, and the part I liked least, for here one feels that one is trusting one's life entirely to a fragile, decayed piece of timber, insecurely fixed moreover,—a broken reed, as it were, with regard to which one has no means of telling the strength, or rather the weakness. It was certainly with a feeling of immense relief—not confined to myself, I think—that I found ourselves upon the firm snows on the furthestmost side, and the three dread crevasses safely spanned in rear.

It is all plain sailing now to the Grands Mulets.

Only a little more tedious trudging up the snow slope, and they are at hand. The *cabane* is seen perched high up upon the rocks. Its site appears to have been chosen on the same principle as those of ancient fortresses—for its inaccessibility. Clambering up the steep sides of the crag, that scarcely affords foothold for a chamois, here we are at length safe at the half-way house. Inside I found the curé, who was changing his boots preparatory to further descent. He told me that he had got only so far as the Bosse du Dromadaire, one of the heights flanking Mont Blanc, and not far from the summit, when he was driven back by the intense cold. In the adjoining room were three young Englishmen, one of them in bed, obviously in great pain. They too had tried to get up and failed—mere striplings, far too slightly built for the endurance needed for an ascent in the exceptionally rigorous state of the weather then prevailing. They had attained to within a few hundred feet of the top, when the sufferer fell down on the snow, and could walk no further,—a

foot so badly frost-bitten that he had to be carried down. They told me there was another party of two out upon the mountain, making the ascent—a French count and an American judge.

Shortly afterwards they entered, radiant with victory. The Frenchman, a healthy looking, strongly made young fellow; the judge, a long, gaunt, grizzly Yankee from the Western States, about sixty years of age, and as hard as nails. It had been perfectly clear when they were upon the top, but so intense was the cold that they could remain only five minutes, and even during that short time they suffered so much as not to be able to appreciate the view. The judge informed me that he had been accustomed to mountaineering in “the Rockies,” but the ascent of Mont Blanc was the most arduous physical exertion that he ever endured. He had been up more difficult heights and over more dangerous ground, but the weary monotonous plodding, step by step, and hour after hour, up steep slopes, and through deep snow tried one’s mettle more than anything else he knew. He

was good enough to say in conclusion, "You seem to have muscle and resolution enough to get up; the only question is, can you stand the awful cold?"

I afterwards discovered that the judge and his feats were the talk of that part of Switzerland at that time. Within a week, he had ascended Monte Rosa, been over the St. Theodule, and crossed the Col de Géant, as I did myself in the next seven days, but unhandicapped by his years. It was said that he had gone up Monte Rosa—a most disrespectful thing to that high peak to do—in a pair of Wellington boots, a swallow-tail coat, a chimney-pot hat, and a walking-stick in his hand. However that might be, when I met him on Mont Blanc he was attired in more unexceptionable mountaineering costume.

After they had departed, wishing me success, I was left alone with the frost-bitten young Englishman and one of his companions, who remained to keep him company. The afternoon was wearing on, and there was little else to do but examine the strange habitation which gave one shelter. It is a long, low, wood cabin, roofed with

branches and sods, weighted down with lumps of stone, and is perched upon the ledge of a ridge of rock. Immediately behind rises the perpendicular cliff; in front runs a platform of planks, not three feet in width, affording one the sentry's promenade, which is all one has. A rafter separates it from the precipice that descends sheer down to the snow beneath, in which yawns a wide crevasse. One end of the cabin serves as a bothy for the guides, the centre is set apart for a kitchen, and the other end, divided by a partition, consists of two small rooms for travellers, with a couple of beds, chairs, and a table each. A woman lives here, who takes a motherly sort of interest in her visitors, and "does for" the place. Crusoe-like her sole companions are a goat or two. In striking contrast to her situation, she is a cheery, and withal a comely body—a merry eye, white teeth, and russet cheeks. Here in this spot, so remote from the abodes of men, in the midst of the mysteries of nature, as it were, it was impossible not to speculate on the pursuits of this lone woman, left solitary in her frail tenement,

perched midway on the mightiest Alp, when the Genius of storm and tempest is abroad. When the mountain is wrapped in mist, or wreathed with drifting snows, when the forked lightning darts through the scud-driven sky, when the howling of the whirlwind combines with the peal of the thunder, when the roar of the cataract mingles with the crash of the avalanche, and earth seems to reel in the throes of impending dissolution, does this female anchorite go into hibernation like a dormouse, and repose in unconsciousness till returning peace and sunshine restore to her, the mountain wanderer; or does "the spirit of the place" enter into and hold communion with her—does she become transformed to a pythoness, or metamorphosed to a sibyl, and rhapsodise on the elemental forces of nature? The life of the light-house keeper tending his constant ray, as he listens to the shriek of the sea bird careering on the blast, the seething of the yeasty surf, and the roar of surging breakers is wild and awe-inspired, but contrasted with hers colourless and tame!

Later in the evening, the invalid, his friend, and I had tea together, and then the second young Englishman and myself went out and took our stand on the narrow platform, and leaned over the rail looking out upon the night and the solitudes of snow. The sky above was of a cold, steel blue, in which the stars gleamed like dagger points, illuminated by lightning; a deathly illness reigned around, only broken now and again by the crash of falling ice; neighbouring heights projected themselves in black shadows on the snow, while in front stretched the spectral glacier all pale and ghastly. It was a weird, unearthly scene. There was something oppressive about it, and after gazing in silence for some time, we were not sorry to retire within.

My guide had arranged to call me at five in the morning. The air was bitterly chill, and I turned in with all my clothes on. As I laid me down, my heart was a little heavy. All had agreed about the fearfulness of the cold, and the

fate of the poor young fellow in the next room weighed upon me. On the other hand, I felt that for the moment, in however small a degree, the honour of my country had been committed to my hands. England so far had failed, France and America had triumphed, and my last waking thoughts shaped a resolve to do or die upon the morrow.

When the guide came to my door at the appointed hour, I was already awake. I felt exactly as though he had come to lead me out to execution. Taking my feet in his hands with the solicitude of the tenderest nurse, he smeared my toes with a mixture of butter and honey, wrapped them in folds of silk, put on my socks, and carefully adjusted and laced my boots. I asked him if the morning was favourable, but he only shook his head, and I could see that not a star of the bright twinklers of yesternight was shining, and the sky had a murky appearance.

After a hasty snack of breakfast, we roped ourselves together as before. One of my friends

from the next room had come out to see us start. Slowly, and indeed a little sadly, without a struggling moon-beam's misty ray, but with a lantern dimly burning, we descended the precarious precipice from our perch, in doing which the previous morning, one of the Englishmen had dropped his alpenstock; that disappeared for ever down the crevasse at the bottom. The foot reached in safety, those above congratulated us so far, and wished us God speed. Away we trudged over the Petit Plateau, not a sound but the crunch, crunch of our feet, and the click of our alpenstocks upon the firm snow. No sun rose bright and warm, it only became a little paler, the lantern burned more faintly, so we extinguished it, and left it on the track till we should return. After what seems an age of effort, we came to a narrow gut or neck, with an ugly crevasse in it, to which we give a wide berth, and connecting the Little with the Grand Plateau—a wide expanse of *névé*—upon a steep incline. Here I began to realise what the American judge

had spoken of—the monotonous, interminable plodding and trudging with toilsome steps, now sinking deep into the snow, then laboriously having to extricate one foot after the other. The *porteur*, a mere lad, who was making the ascent for the first time, now began to strain upon the rope, poor boy, and distress me considerably, especially as I made it a point of honour to keep the bit in front of me slack. A cold grey mist gathered like a London fog, so dense that I could not see the guides in front of me, but only hear them muttering together. I feared they were proposing to turn back, and again and again implored them, almost despairingly, not to do so, but go on. At the Rochers Rouges the guides stopped, and pointed out where the Englishman had fallen, tackets being sprinkled on the snow, probably knocked from the sole of his boot, in an attempt to restore circulation. In the corridor, a deep confined gully of snow, the stagnation of air was so great that I felt disposed to be suffocated. Just as we emerged, my feet, thanks to the

precautionary measures of my faithful Palinurus, having meanwhile kept as warm as toast, a little puff of wind arose, and, although I had been on the constant look-out for something of the sort, in an instant I felt that my lips were becoming dead. I bit them till the blood nearly came, but no use. I then told the guide, who gave them a good rubbing with snow and brandy; but for a fortnight afterwards they caused me a good deal of pain, and were somewhat unsightly. The mist now lifted a little, and the round dome of Mont Blanc showed quite near. The guides assured me we should soon reach the top now. An eternity appeared to pass, height was surmounted after height, Mont Blanc looked near, but no nearer. Hope deferred was making the heart sick, and it seemed as though we were but engaged in the fruitless chase of an *ignis-fatuus*, flickering on a morass, evasive of one's grasp.

The guides had been pressing the pace, on account of the weather—that and the altitude combined were beginning to tell upon me. The

palpitation of my heart became so great that, towards the last, on the steep of the Côte de la Mur, I was obliged every few steps to throw myself at full length down upon the snow. It was now the young *porteur's* turn. Whenever I flung myself down, he would come to the rescue with a kindly "Courage, Monsieur, courage!" and, but for his cheering sympathy, I think I should have given it up in pure despair. Ah, François Couttet, ah, brown-eyed, ruddy checked Savoyard youth, shall we ever together again adventure the ice slope and the *arête*, or is it yours first to find among wreaths of alpine snow your winding-sheet, and mine to leave my bones in the burning soil of the "circular road?" At last the heights are gained; the summit won. There cannot be a doubt about it. We are standing on the very top of the Calotte—a broad convexity of snow—no rival summits near, only the arching heavens are overhead. Here also, fluttering their tattered pennons, are the little flag-posts. I go and walk round them, and touch them to satisfy myself of

the fact that we are really at the very top—that it is no illusion after all. Then, with my alpenstock, deep on the snowy brow of the mountain, I score the words *Nil ultra*.

The air was no longer so cold, and I found, now that exertion had ceased, that I could breathe as comfortably as down in Chamounix. We all seated ourselves on the snow, and had a little pic-nic. A bottle of Asti spumante was produced, and in it we pledged each other, the mountain, and the successful ascent we had accomplished. The head guide took out a piece of paper, on which we all inscribed our names. This he enclosed in the empty Asti bottle, which he tied to one of the flag-posts, at the same time tearing off a piece from the little red drapeau. He explained that, as it was too thick to perceive us from below, it was necessary to have some evidence that we had made the ascent.

In clear weather, so they tell, one can see as far as Maggiore and the Lombardian plains, even to the city of La Scala and the marble fane. No

such fortune was ours. We remained twenty minutes at the top, but had no view at all. The mist rose and fell alternately; when it fell, clouds and thick darkness; when it lifted, indistinct tracts of snow,—portions of the vast flanks of the mountain,—and wreaths of grey vapour circling up from its cavernous depths. This was not without a grandeur of its own. There was a mysteriousness and solemnity about it—something impressive of immensity and profundity.

Of the descent but little remains to be told—*facilis decensus Averni*. What had taken hours and hours with toilsome steps and slow, we repassed pleasurably in what appeared a few minutes. At the top of the Grand Plateau, we all *hunkered* down, as the Scotch say, one behind the other, and away we glissaded like a lightning express, the keen air rushing through our lungs, and the particles of frozen snow flying over our heads like clouds of diamond dust—of all modes of motion the most delightful and exhilarating this! We steered ourselves with our alpenstocks,

which, with our heels, formed the most efficient of breaks, pulling us up in a few yards, when we wished to come to a stop. The Petit Plateau was passed in the same exciting-fashion. At the Grands Mulets we found the young Englishman up, and making ready to go down, though still lame. Recrossing the great crevasses, I found descending even worse than mounting the three rotten-looking ladders. At the Pierre Pointue, I threw myself on a bench, and slept soundly for half-an-hour, till the guide roused me. Soon after we were down in the abodes of men again, amidst sunshine and warmth, among crystal streams, green pastures, and tinkling sheep-bells.

It was a little after five when we got to Chamounix. As I entered it, two small pieces of ordnance were exploded, to announce to the lieges the momentous intelligence of another successful ascent, while—floral mead, simple as Olympic olive or Isthmian ivy—a nosegay of Alpine flowers was put into my hand—blushing honours that made me feel rather awkward, and the observed of all ob-

servers. On the door-steps of the Pension Couttet I found the American judge and the French count, who warmly congratulated me. They told me we had been observed through the telescope early in the morning, above the Grands Mulets, but it became so thick, and we had been so short a time in making the ascent and descent, that at first it was feared we had been unsuccessful. Whereupon I produced the bit of the little red drapeau, now fluttering in its isolation so far above, and remarked to the judge that it was no doubt very absurd, but that the whole time I was making the ascent a sort of "excelsior" spirit seemed to animate me. He replied, "Don't be ashamed of it, young man. I am old enough to be your father, but I felt the same thing myself."

Next day, at the Bureau du Guide Chef, I obtained a magnificent printed diploma, containing the names of my companions and myself, and certifying, under the hand and seal of the great functionary, that we had made the ascent of Mont Blanc.

TO MONT BLANC.

THOU mighty mount, enrobed in spotless white,
From summit's crest to broadly buttressed base,
Awhile, within the altitudes of air,
Thou towerest up majestically serene,
The snowy argent of thy doméd head
Commingling with the azure-vaulted sphere,
And diademed thy brow with golden stars.
Anon the rolling vapours wrap thy heights
With folds impervious of thickest cloud,
And like a hooded eagle bind thee blind.
Upon thy crest the hurricane hath burst,
And spent the harmless fury of its ire,
Adown thy slopes the avalanche hath swept,
Revolving centuries have o'er thee rolled,
And kings and kingdoms crumbled into dust,
But still thou art—unchanging and unchanged.

Poor human heart, thou too canst soar as high,
And pierce the limits of its utmost ken.
Thy upward gaze is also clear and calm,
Again obscured by mists of doubt and dread,
And passion's stormy gusts have swayed thee oft,
And o'er thee blown fierce blasts of wild desire.
How changed and changing thou, how short thy day,
A little span, a few brief years, no more, 13738
And thou shalt be as though thou hadst not been.

CHAPTER II.

TO INDIA.

“SOUTHAMPTON WATER,” how different in various people are the memories that these words awaken! To some, they recall the broad reach bathed in warm sunshine, its bosom flecked with white-winged pleasure craft, sweet homes nestling in bowery glades along its shores, and harmonious moods of happiness and mirth. Others, they serve but to remind of chill October, or drear December, and feelings of corresponding gloom. For hence, and at these seasons, the greater number of people leave by the P. and O. for India, and here it is that some of the saddest partings in all England take place.

On a cold raw afternoon, in the fall of the year, you take your way to Waterloo Station, with your numerous luggage—these black over-

land trunks, with your name and destination painted thereon in white letters, that, of late, have been gradually accumulating in your abode—objects about as cheerful to contemplate as his coffin to a monk of La Trappe. Speeding through the glooming landscape, the unfamiliar town is reached at dark, and you put up at the big railway hotel. The lobby is crowded with baggage, all marked for the far East. Anglo-Indians are about everywhere. An atmosphere of depression seems to pervade the place, and the last night at Southampton will ever form one of the most dismal in your experience. Next morning, as you look through the hotel windows on which the rain is beating, the first thing to strike your eye is the long black hull and dark funnel of the P. and O. liner, flying the blue peter, which, in so few hours now, is to bear you away from all your past. Soon, affording a momentary distraction, comes the hurry and bustle of getting on board with your luggage. The wretched lascars, yellow from the cold, in their scant garb

of red or blue calico, already in fancy transport you to the plains of Hindostan. The decks are crowded with Indian officers, ladies, children with ayahs, and friends who have come to see them off promenading up and down, in earnest conversation, and evidently making the most of the little time that yet remains for them to be together. Next, the mail bags come down in huge piles and are taken on board. The last bell rings to warn all who are not going on to get ashore. Now are warm pressures of the hand, tender last adieux are spoken, lip takes leave of lip, wet cheeks from tearful eyes are seen, and even sobs burst out. The gangway is pulled ashore. Slowly the vessel moves from the edge of the quay, but a foot or two divides you, you could even yet spring ashore, but already you feel what a gulf is there. Gradually the great vessel rounds, fluttering of handkerchiefs between ship and shore, she passes through the narrow mouth of the dock, shoots out into the stream and glides fast away.

Such, very much, was my experience, as, early in December 1875, I sailed from Southampton, on board the s.s. "Surat," outward bound for Calcutta. Rapidly the shores of Old England receded from the gaze, the great iron shears and the big hotel where the last night was spent continuing longest in view. Naturally one's thoughts took a melancholy direction. It was impossible not to speculate on the chances of life, and wonder if ever again one would see that England to which farewell had just been said, and if those left behind would still be there on one's return. Somewhat misanthropic and Byronic, I paced the deck, mentally repeating, as a refrain to my reflections, the familiar lines—

"Adieu, adieu, my native shore
Fades o'er the waters blue,
The night winds sigh, the breakers roar,
And shrieks the wild sea mew.
Yon sun that sets upon the sea,
We follow in his flight,
Farewell awhile to him and thee,
My native land, good night."

It was growing dark and indistinct. The Royal Mail s.s. "Moselle," that had sailed out with us, now parted company, she for the West, we for the East. Soon I turned in, as did most others, glad to seek forgetfulness in sleep; and thus night settled down upon troubled waters, and hearts more troubled than the sea.

Next morning I was up on deck betimes; we were off the coast of France, in the neighbourhood of Cape la Hogue, the chalky outlines of which were dimly visible. The change of scene, the crisp morning air, and the onward movement of the vessel dispelled the gathered gloom of yesternight, and a reactionary hilarity set in. It is not those who leave, but they who are left, who feel the full bitterness of parting. To see the friend of years depart for distant lands, perhaps for ever, and then to go back to the dull, deadening routine of the mill, and to a world from which the sun has been removed! The passengers appear by detachments, looking all the better for the bright morning and the fresh breeze. They

had not begun to mix together yet, but regarded each other with those looks of amiable suspicion, so characteristic of travelling Britons, which seem to say, "Well, I wonder for what particular felony you are leaving your country for your country's good." Now we come into the terrible Bay of Biscay, and at meals only the "fiddles" appear at table. Cape Finisterre, in Spain—black weather-beaten reefs—is sighted next, and, running down the Portuguese coast, are passed those scenes of England's naval triumphs—St. Vincent and Trafalgar. Lastly, we anchor in the bay of Gibraltar, the rock looming vast above, in the form of a colossal wedge—ancient Calpe. Across the straits, upon the Libyan sands, rises the twin monument, Abyla, or Apes Hill, as we call it, with Ceuta at its base; while on the opposite side of the bay lies the pretty Spanish town of Algeciras—all sparkling in a sunshine almost tropical in its brightness and warmth. So strong is the sun, that the old Indians on board, "Quihies" they call themselves, now introduce us to that myste-

rious oriental head-dress the solar topee, in which they disport themselves, looking very like inedible fungi. In the Alameda, oleanders and pomegranates are blooming, with their rosy red flowers, and golden globes glimmer amid the glossy, dark green leaves of the orange trees. What a transformation, almost like a scene in a Christmas pantomime; but a day or two before, we were shivering in the sleet and murkiness of Southampton. We had no time to inspect the famous galleries, whose embrasures, far overhead, show out through the foliage, like port-holes in the side of a ship, so we contented ourselves with driving across the Neutral Ground—a flat neck of land that joins Gibraltar to Spain. In appearance the streets are totally foreign, and the population as well, Spaniard, Moor, and African, but mingling amongst them are the familiar blue jackets and red coats. At every corner English sentries are on guard, and, high up upon the bastions, the Union Jack is flying. It is, when for the first time an Englishman sets his face

towards the East, that he learns to the full extent how proud a thing it is to be, as the Americans call us, a Britisher. With us, eastward the course of empire takes its way, and as he stops at each in succession of the chain of fortresses that links India to England, this not altogether reprehensible feeling of proud patriotism is intensified, and with difficulty he restrains an imprecation against those political poltroons and debilitated doctrinaires who are perpetually advocating the abdication of their country.

Passing between the Herculean pillars of the world-famous portal, we enter the Inner Sea, on our way to Malta. The next few days are spent in ploughing the deep blue waters of the Mediterranean. Parallel with the African coast, the Atlas range, a fine chain of mountains, continues in view, their snowy peaks not unlike the Bernese Oberland, as seen from the Rigi. The sunsets were some of the finest I have ever anywhere beheld, vast masses of cumuli, magnificent conflagrations of red and gold. After skirting the shores of Gozo—Calypso's isle—we

drop anchor under the guns of St. Elmo. Rising upwards from the water's edge, at the extremity of Mount Sceberras,—an elevated promontory that juts out between two large basins or harbours filled with shipping—the city of La Valette, the lustrous whiteness of its walls and houses contrasting the azure of its translucent waters, bluer than the Symplegades, forms one of the most brilliant pictures anywhere to be seen. No sooner were we moored, than the ship was surrounded by swarms of boats, each crew of Maltese boatmen, swarthy, stalwart fellows, picturesquely clad in red and blue, with great muscular feet, that they use like hands, eagerly entreating us to patronise their particular craft. The streets, the houses of which are of stone of a peculiar whiteness, flat-roofed, with green venetians and balconies, from which look down dark-eyed beauties, are narrow and steep, almost all with flights of steps, and every now and then, in perspective at the foot of them, one suddenly comes upon peeps of the blue sea beyond. The pest of Malta, how-

ever, is its innumerable beggars, who beset strangers, whom they can scent from afar, with an energetic pertinacity that I have never seen elsewhere exhibited. The two chief lions of Valetta, which, of course, under the ciceroneship of the old hands who had been there before, everybody went to see, are the Palace, with portraits of the Grand Masters, some fine specimens of Gobelin tapestry, and suites of armour; and the cathedral of St. John, with exquisite little side chapels in the interior, each appropriated to one of the greater nations of Christendom. The barracks are enormous, the arsenals stupendous, and the fortifications gigantic, while the place is simply alive with military life and bustle. At every turn, amid the throngs of semi-Italian, semi-Oriental natives, the red coat is encountered, and English bugle-calls ring out upon the air. In the Strada Reale, as the main street is called, are the principal jewellers' shops, where they sell eau de Cologne, French kid gloves, and the beautiful coral and silver ornaments for which Malta is celebrated.

Here a vast amount of purchasing took place, and a good many little keepsakes and souvenirs were given and exchanged.

Once more we are upon the Mediterranean, out of sight of land now, only once and again an isolated high towering peak is passed to accentuate the loneliness. The next day or two are somewhat monotonous, but we have all got more or less friendly now, so the time is spent in playing Bull, and reading during the day, and in the evenings singing upon deck, whist, and mild flirtations. We had one or two Indian officers on board, a class of men perhaps the most agreeable and conversable of any I have met in the course of my travels round the world.* Of these one was known as *par excellence* "the Major;" simple as a child, brave as a lion, he was the favourite of all on board. Of a name not unknown to Indian history in connection with the mutiny of Vellore, he belonged to a frontier regiment of irregular horse—a corps that was the pride of his heart. He had been all his life in India since a boy, and could talk Pushtoo like a Pathan, and

Hindustani like his mother tongue. He had just six months more to serve to gain the brevet rank of colonel, and then, well-earned reward of all these long years of service in exile, he was, as he so eagerly looked forward to do, to retire for good, to take lodgings near his club in London during the winter, and to spend the summer and autumn in those Highlands that he so truly loved. Well do I remember him. Many a time in the early morning, before the decks were yet dry, have I seen the tall stalwart figure, wrapped in his choga, pacing up and down, his long, tawny mustachoes floating in the wind. Poor fellow, during my short stay in India, I read one morning in the papers that he had been struck down with heat apoplexy. How often is it, as Anglo-Indians too well know, that these few last months, just needed for the pension or the brevet rank, render all in vain !

The blue waters of the Mediterranean have now become turbid and discoloured, where the Nile disembogues its alluvial floods into the sea. Soon a lighthouse and a low-lying stretch of sandy shore

appear. We are approaching the mouth of the Suez Canal. Amid a host of steamers of all nations, ranged in avenues on either side, but amongst them all the British flag predominant, we enter, and lie off Port Said, a miserable town of grog shops, dancing saloons, and gambling hells, where in confraternal embrace the blackguardism of the West joins hands with the scoundrelism of the East.

A couple of tedious days are spent in slowly steaming through the Canal, crawling along at a snail's pace, frequently sticking in the mud, especially at the bends, and consuming great efforts and much time in warping off again with hawsers. On either side, the banks stretch away in boundless tracts of flat sandy desert, clothed with stunted scrub. At sunset, against the distant horizon, may be descried strings of camels, and loose-robed Arabs holding spears, slowly wending their way in a golden haze. Instinctively the scene calls up Old Testament associations of patriarchs, of flocks and herds, of Mesopotamia and Padan-aram. Ismailia, standing a short way back from the Canal, on the right bank.

going eastward, is a very pretty place, its white Franco-Egyptian villas nestling in an oasis of drooping willows. The sight of the Canal, however, is to see the sun rise in the great Bitter Lake—a vast plain of brackish water—for which purpose one is advised to be up at four. A faint flush begins to pervade the eastern sky, soft as dove colour, herald of the approach of day, then the sun itself tips up above the hill tops, a great globe of gold, flooding space with mellow glow, burnishing the glassy surface of the lake, and reflected from the arid heights of the red copper-coloured mountains stretching in front towards Suez. Emerging from the confining margins of the Canal, the wide extending waters of the head of the gulf, environed by amphitheatral mountains, are entered. Here we moored alongside of the wharf, where we were to lie several hours to coal and tranship. The harbour presented an appearance of unusual activity—all the stir of a military encampment, on account of large bodies of Egyptian troops being drilled, with bands of music at their head, on their way to the

Abyssinian war. They were uniformed like Zouaves, and carried breech-loaders, and in size and build formed as fine a body of men as I ever saw under arms. How ill they must have been led!

The town of Suez lies some four miles from the harbour, and to reach it the only mode is on donkey-back. A crowd of these useful animals was in attendance, each with its youthful squire, who was voluble in exhibiting and extolling the points of his particular steed. These boys, with a happy appreciation of true greatness, and a most praiseworthy impartiality, bestow upon their donkeys the names of our political and other celebrities of the day, as Gladstone, Dizzy, Salisbury, Lowe. The favourite donkey when I was there was Dr. Kenealy; indeed there were half-a-dozen claimants to that honoured name. Amid the laughter of the ladies, who had come to see the start, away we dashed, a jovial crew, at a merry canter, the donkey boys flogging their quadrupeds up behind. What with stirrups breaking, and saddles turning round, full many a gallant knight

bit the dust that day, pricking o'er the sandy plains. Into the streets of Suez we clattered, a most imposing cavalcade, received by the haughty Saracens with profound obeisance, and evidently regarded as the advance guard of a new crusade.

Going eastward, Suez is the first genuinely oriental town the traveller encounters, and, although the first, it is one of the most characteristically eastern in appearance, no matter how far towards the sun he may journey. The mud walls, the square, flat-topped houses, with small slits for windows, the narrow bazaars, the shops with open fronts, displaying bright coloured clothes, and piles of fruits and sweetmeats; the throngs of men in flowing robes and turbans, the women with timid gait and muffled faces, the mosques and minarets, the squalor and filth in close proximity with bright colouring and picturesqueness, all go to make up a typical scene of eastern life. None the less oriental is it that, at the same time, it is a den of thieves and a nest of assassins.

It was with heavy hearts that the Major, one or two others, and myself took leave of our friends in the old "Surat," and transhipped on board the s.s. "Zambesi," to proceed to Bombay. We never got on so well with the people in the new vessel. There were a number of official swells on board, and a corresponding amount of pomposity and "side," with their correlative dullness and stupidity, while certainly the "Zambesi" was not freighted with that amount of female beauty and attractiveness of which the "Surat" could boast. In addition, old voyagers told me that, on the strength of some ten or fifteen pounds more passage money, the Brindisi passengers always affect to look down upon the Southampton passengers. An early illustration of one of not the least amiable and amusing of Anglo-Indian traits which, especially amongst ladies, estimates the worth of each person, and the quantum of civility to be shown by the amount of his monthly "tollub." Thus the wife of the acting sub-deputy-assistant collector of Junglepore sniffs the air, and turns up her nose, when

she finds herself in the same room with the wife of the acting sub-deputy-assistant magistrate of the same important district, because her husband's paggar is one rupee per mensem more than that of the husband of the object of her disdain. From these chota-wallahs through all the intermediate grades, up to the burra sabs and burra mem sabs, is this lovely characteristic of Anglo-Indian official human benevolence exemplified.

The sail down the Gulf of Suez is particularly fine, the coast on either side remains in sight, consisting of bare high-peaked mountain ranges, like a succession of Coolin hills, and amongst those on the peninsula, the eye wanders to dwell

“ On the secret top
Of Oreb or of Sinai ; ”

while these are the waters

“ Whose waves o’erthrew
Busiris and his Memphian chivalry.”

The gulf now widens into the sea, so broad that the land on either side melts from view. Five tedious days succeeded by as many comfortless nights

were we in the Red Sea. Though in December, generally considered one of the coolest months, the humid heat was intense, without a breath of air (what there was being aft) to temper it. The poor "sedee boys," in a state of prostration, used to come up on deck from the stokehole for a breath of air, the perspiration bursting through the grime of coaldust. The water in the baths, taken direct from the sea, was almost boiling hot. Truly has it been observed, that in the Red Sea the only intervention between us and the infernal regions is a sheet of brown paper. During the day, we old "Suratians" had little to do but watch the course of the "Surat," a mile or two ahead, and wish ourselves on board of her. At night, one had to make choice between the risk of dysentery on deck or being stifled in one's berth below. Towards the foot of the Red Sea, on a coast fringe of gleaming sand, we caught a glimpse of the white walls and mosques of coffee-celebrated Mocha, glistening in the rays of the fiery sun of Arabia Felix, and gave the cold shoulder to a

dozen fantastic-shaped rocks called the Twelve Apostles—poor Judas apart by himself, rather out in the cold. The sea now narrows again, till, at length, we approach and pass through the “Gate of Tears,”—Babel-Mandeb as it is better known,—a tearful gate indeed, for many on their way home from India, exhausted by the climate, enter it to die. Hereabout, lazily rising and falling with the swell, are to be seen those high-sterned dhows, with huge square mat-sails, and swarming with hadjis on their way to holy Mecca.

Finally, last stoppage on the way to India, we halt a few hours to coal at Aden—itsself a pointed cinder spewed up hot out of the jaws of hell. A scene baffling all description now takes place, a perfect Pandemonium. Arabs, Ethiops, and Nubians board the ship, and in a babel of languages press upon you their various wares, as tortoiseshell, madrepore, and ostrich feathers. The water, meanwhile, is alive with boats, skiffs, rafts, and anything that will float, with, clustering upon them thick as bees, Soumali boys, naked.

little imps, dark as Erebus, and graceful as Ganymedes, with curly locks, in some for insecticidal purposes bleached with lime a brick red, who keep up an incessant chorus of "I dive," "I dive," "I dive," and who, for small silver coins thrown into the water, do dive and bring them up again, long before they reach the bottom, as well as plunging below the steamer, in at one side and up at the other, besides indulging in a variety of other highly entertaining freaks and escapades. After this exhibition, we took a boat, and visited our old friends in the "Surat," who received us with open arms, and then landed on the cinder. At the P. and O. bungalow, the only spot of green upon it, we got our letters, and then in vehicles set off to inspect those gigantic tanks hewn out of the living rock, and capable of containing the whole water supply of the station for a lengthened period, often empty, however, for want of rain for years together, and which can only have been made by that people whose engineers constructed the Cloaca Maxima and the Appian Way.

From Aden the course is shaped direct across the Arabian Sea to Bombay, the last land sighted being the island of Socotra, on the starboard bow, not long after leaving. The final stage of the voyage out is the most wearisome of all—an unvarying monotony, steaming day after day over an unbroken sea, beneath a torrid sky, and in an atmosphere almost as hot and moist as the Red Sea itself. Often used I to go to the bow of the vessel, and standing right above the cut-water, a horizon of sea all round, look over the glassy surface we were cleaving into foam, towards that great unknown land we were now so rapidly approaching, and wonder what it was all like.

On the morning of the day before we got in, one of the saloon passengers died, and in the afternoon he was buried. Since then, I have made many voyages, both long and short, in all the waters of the world, but this was the first and only burial at sea that I have ever witnessed. It made a lasting impression on me, and no one who has ever seen it, but will allow that it is

the most solemn ceremony in which he has ever played a part. The ship is brought to a stop, the flag is put up half-mast high, the bell is tolled, a small knot gathers on the quarter-deck, the ladies in what dark coloured dress they may have, and the men in black coats, prayer books in their hands. The captain, in a manly, nautical voice, so much more impressive than the sacerdotal whine of the professional, reads the solemn and sublime service for the dead, the little group joining in the responses. The body has been brought up by the quarter-masters, sewn in its hammock, a couple of furnace bars at the feet, with the Union Jack over it for a pall, and been placed on a grating outside the bulwarks. At the words "commit his body to the deep," a splash is heard, and the gurgling sound of water, the flag is run up, and taken down, the engine bell sounds full speed ahead, and where the propeller has changed the blue into white foam, one can see where, full many a fathom down, rocked in the cradle of the deep, our messmate

takes his rest. A profound gloom seems to hang over the vessel, but it is as brief as for the time it is deep. It is marked at tiffin, at dinner it has almost passed away, and at night, in the saloon, the touchy commissioner of Chutneeghur, who suffers from liver, is just as usual down upon the muddle-headed collector of Guddahabad for a revoke, or other venial infraction of the eternal laws of whist; while in that quiet corner upon deck, not the less tender are the accents of the young "griff," nor soft the answering gaze of the "destroying angel"—in the gallantry of Anglo-Indian parlance, all ladies with the least pretensions to looks are "destroying angels,"—under the tropic stars. At first one is disposed to find this short-lived sorrow a little heartless and painful, but, while it lasts, it is sincere, and anything more would merely be constraint and affectation. All it shows, and it brings home the salutary lesson sharply, is the utter insignificance of any individual existence.

The sun—a blood-red ball—had dipped beneath

the waves, and the last day of the year was drawing to its close as we sighted the shores of India, the vast coast ranges looming from afar. Then streaming its guiding rays across the waters, now waxing now waning, comes the revolving light on Colaba. By the time the anchor was dropped, it was almost dark, too dim to view the scene—a broad expanse of land-locked water, indistinct outlines of surrounding heights, numerous shipping at their moorings, and beyond the far-stretching multitudinous scintillations of the great strange city. Soon we are encompassed by a crowd of boats; a mingled throng swarms upon deck of port officials, friends and acquaintances of passengers, with retinues of natives an indescribable tumult, a confusion of tongues, violent hand-shakings, loud greetings, and louder laughter, with imperious orders to servants. Peace at last. A large number of the passengers depart on shore with their friends, acquaintances, retainers, and belongings, leaving the decks to darkness and to me. But a few now remain; of these, some

resolve to see the New Year in—a proceeding that I have never found either very lively or advantageous, as one is pretty sure to make its acquaintance soon enough without, and on this occasion it appeared to me that the observance would be even less cheerful than usual. So, while the Old Year's sands of life were fast running out, I sought oblivion in the semblance of death, and on the morrow I am to set foot upon the coral strand of that fabled Ind, of which I had woven so many a dream.

CHAPTER III.

IN INDIA.

AS I leant over the taffrail, in the early morning, viewing the scene, an Indian sun bathed with its warmth and lustre all those features that had been veiled in the obscurity of the previous night--the wide expanse of mount-encircled waters, studded with cone-formed islands clothed with tufted palms; the great liners of the P. and O. and the Messagerie riding at their anchors; beyond, upon the mainland, the stupendous wall of the Western Ghats; while nearer, across the bay, could be discerned the red earthy shore, from which rose the higher buildings of the city. Whether the original meaning of Bombay be *fair haven* or not, assuredly there are few harbours in the world more beautiful or commodious than that of the dotal isle of the Infanta of Portugal.

While I was thus occupied in admiring the prospect, the steam launch came alongside, into which we all transferred ourselves, with our manifold packages, and speeding over the glistening waters landed at the Mazagon Bunder, as the quay or wharf is called. After passing the luggage through the customs, no trying ordeal, we got into gharris and drove off to Pestonjee Palonjee's hotel in Byculla. On the way, I remember how much I was struck with the denseness and luxuriance of the tropical vegetation, amongst which were pointed out to me palms of various kinds, tamarind, mango, and peepul trees, with the broad-leafed plantain. At the hotel we were received, with dignity and courtesy combined, by the proprietor Pestonjee Palonjee himself, a portly Parsee gentleman of venerable and benign aspect, clad in spotless white, with a beard more snowy than his raiment, and one of the truest friends to the Feringhee. Peace to his ashes!

After tiffin some of us sallied out in buggies to inspect the town. The bazaars through which we

drove, unlike those of most other Indian cities, are wide thoroughfares, with lofty buildings from three to four storeys high, the fronts of many carved and gorgeously coloured. Pouring through them in one never-ceasing conflicting current, representatives of nearly every race, creed, clime under heaven mingle together—Parsees, Persians, Africans, Arabs, Marathas—handsomest of Indian peoples, tall and slight, with voluminous red pagrees—Carnatas, Indo-Portuguese, Chinese, Jews, and English tars, lending, by diversity of costume and variety of feature, an animation and picturesqueness to the street life of Bombay of which perhaps no other city in the world can boast to the like extent. Differing from Calcutta, the capital of the Western Presidency is essentially Oriental, and not Anglo-Indian in appearance.

The European quarter, with the public buildings, is imposing in the extreme, wide open spaces, laid down in grass, ornamented with bronze monuments, and showing off to advantage large piles of solid stone-built masonry, of which the rock

foundations of Bombay admit. Of the older edifices, the most conspicuous are the Elphinstone circle, a handsome circus of commercial buildings, the Town Hall, and the Cathedral of St. Thomas—the apostle of the Indies. Of the newer, the University, and the High Court in course of erection. When I was there, Bombay was still in a state of architectural embryo, but it gave promise to be, when completed, one of the best built and handsomest cities in the world.

Towards evening the whole of Bombay, native as well as European, turns out in every variety of vehicle to take the air. The drive is along the marine lines, and the esplanade—a straight, broad course skirting the shore, upon which the waves lap murmurously, with a fine view seawards. It terminates in an open space, with a bandstand in the centre, round which the carriages collect, whose occupants sit and listen to the strains or get out and promenade. A gay and lively scene; while, to heighten the orientalism of it all, just as the sun, a lambent orb, is bending towards the ocean

verge, may be observed, kneeling in adoration upon the beach, with folded hands, and faces turned towards the declining rays, Zoroastrian descendants of the ancient Ghebers—

“Those slaves of fire who morn and even
Hail their Creator’s dwelling place
Among the living lights of heaven.”

Not in the act of idolatry, as the bigot of another creed might charitably assume, but recognising in it the supreme symbol of deity—a belief, which, if the sun be the one dispenser of life, the centre of our system, and the motive force of our universe—that luminary whose very maculations influence famines in Madras and cycles of commercial depression at home, seems to me philosophically accurate, as well as in the highest ennobling.

That evening, the first of the year, I dined at the Byculla Club, of which I had been made an honorary member. It is perhaps not too much to say that, out of London, the Byculla is the best club in the world. It has only one possible com-

petitor, also an Indian club—the Madras. Most opinions, I believe, favour the latter; my preference is for the former; however, they are almost equal, and *par nobile fratrum*. It is a spacious mansion, in a large compound or garden of its own. The dining-room is one of the most beautifully proportioned halls I have ever seen, lightsomely decorated in that most effective combination—white and gold. Here I became acquainted with the pomfret, most highly prized of fish that swim these seas; tasted a variety of curries, and such curries, with Bombay duck; ate snipe and other delicacies, drank iced simkin, as champagne is called in India; and, while a descendant of the prophet, not like Jeames in yellow plush and silk stockings, but with bare feet, bearded like the pard, in ample snowy turban, and gorgeous club cupra — Ali Bux his name — with a huge two-handed punkah, created gentle zephyrs around the brows of the unbelieving dog, abandoned myself for once, as being the first time, to the full seductiveness of oriental sybaritism.

At a distance of a mile or two, there runs crosswise behind the town a low range called Malabar Hill, ending in a rocky point that juts into the sea. Here are situated most of the private residences, roomy bungalows embowered in palms, standing in their own grounds, lovely gardens with bright-flowered, heavy-scented exotics, as we should call them, but indigenous enough here, and with beautiful outlooks over Back Bay, a deep indentation of the sea fronting them below. Of one of the finest of them—on the Gomballa Hill, however—an adjacent spur—I was fortunate enough to have an interior view at dinner one evening. After the heat of the day, the cool sea breeze came softly blowing through the open doors and windows, the moonbeams streamed into the airy chambers, through the tops of the cocoa palms, and the waves beneath broke soothingly upon the beach. If Anglo-Indian existence be a purgatory, I thought, it must be a very delicious one, and better than many a paradise elsewhere.

On this lovely site it is that those ghoul-haunted dokhmas, or towers of silence, cast their black shadows,—low, circular structures, of large diameter, open to the sky, receptacles for the Parsee dead, wherein they are deposited nude, upon iron gratings, to be devoured by those guardian angels of the tomb, Promethean kites and vultures, unclean birds which may be observed perched round their rims, gorged, and incapable after their hideous banquet. Of all methods of disposing of the dead, surely this is the most revolting, and, in a sect of which the purifying sanctity of fire is so strong a tenet, the more inexplicable, unless that element be esteemed so holy as to be defiled by being employed for the purpose of human disintegration.

During my short sojourn in Bombay, a number of my late fellow-passengers, together with myself, chartered a small launch, and made an excursion to that most famous of its sights, the caves of Elephanta. Starting from the Apollo Bunder, an hour or so's steaming across the harbour brought •

us to Elephanta Island, so called from a colossal stone elephant, now maimed and mutilated, which the Portuguese discovered there. A long stone causeway leads up to the caves for a considerable portion of the distance, after which the ascent is continued by a path. The island is lofty and conical, clothed with palms and scrub, with fine views over the harbour, islands, and mainland, and pretty peeps down into its own little valleys, vivid with green rice-fields. The entrance to the cave is in the face of the hill, rather low and unimposing, and somewhat overgrown with jungle; but within a vast cavern extends 130 feet or so in length, by about 110 wide, and 15 high, hewn out of the dense living rock. The roof is flat and supported by squat, thickset pillars—balustral, I believe, they are designated in architecture. The walls are profusely sculptured with colossal figures, powerfully executed in high relief, the grotesque, many-handed, many-headed divinities of the Hindoo Pantheon. Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva—the sacred triad, are represented here with their

various emblems—Siva, the ruthless destroyer, adorned with deathheads and hooded cobras, while they are combined in one in a gigantic triple-faced bust or trimurti. Of all the figures, however, that of Parvati, the spouse of Siva, impressed me most as by far the finest piece of sculpture, a large-limbed, great-breasted woman, with full lips and heavy eyelids, voluptuous with the sensuousness not of passion, but languor, and not without a strange, fascinating beauty of its own. The figures are greatly defaced through the action of weather, water, and still more destructive religious iconoclasm. They, therefore, convey a sense of vast antiquity, and coming, in that still out-of-the-world spot, upon those cyclopean remains of a bygone age, in the very bowels of the earth as it were, is singularly awe-inspiring. One afterwards learns, however, with regard to them, that, as in the case of most Indian monuments, their antiquity is by no means remote, and these are ascribed to a period not earlier than the tenth century of our era. A

pic-nic outside, where, under the shade of the dread Mahadeva, we drank Indian pale ale and sacrilegiously consumed beef sandwiches, brought this delightful excursion to an end.

Bidding farewell to Bombay, I again resumed my journey towards its ultimate destination—Calcutta. After traversing portions of the islands of Bombay and Salsette, the G. I. P. reaches the mainland, where the great coast barrier is encountered, which it surmounts through the Tal Ghat, upwards of 1900 feet in height, by a series of immense zig-zags. We crossed it in the full moonlight; above impended the high mountain tops; below, their bare flanks sloped down to the lair of beasts of prey. Next morning, we were speeding through leveller territory, with wide stretches of jungle-land on either side. Occasionally birds of bright plumage flashed across an open, uttering discordant cries, and large white-bodied black-faced monkeys might be seen bounding from bough to bough. Stations were infrequent, but at all the stoppages one found well-stocked buffets,

just as on any railway system in England, while a few yards across the line would take you to a group of mud-walled cottages, with little naked black things running about the doors, and the occupiers leading exactly the same lives, and observing the same manners and customs as they did centuries before the English were ever heard of in India. The contrast was remarkable—the railway train, its locomotives and carriages, types of the most advanced modern civilisation, and in juxtaposition the natural wild, and the primitive life of its inhabitants. Often, subsequently, has that contrast occurred to me as symbolical of our whole rule in India—two streams flowing side by side that refuse to blend, like the Rhone and the Arve, or better, their own Jumna and Ganges.

Those best acquainted with India say that our influence upon it has been mere scratching upon the surface; that of its inner life, we know little, and upon it have had no effect; so that if our reign in India were to terminate to-morrow, we

should leave but an imperishable name, and vast monuments of engineering that, as soon as our backs were turned, would be abandoned to wreck and ruin, to become memorials like the caves of Elephanta.

En route, at the railway station of Jubblepore, I found myself in the neighbourhood of one of the famed sights of India, "the Marble Rocks"—a deep gorge with walls of white marble, through which the sacred Nerbuddha rolls its waters. Unfortunately, I was too impatient to proceed, to stop and visit it—an omission I never afterwards had an opportunity to supply.

On the second morning after leaving Bombay, the train rattles over a high-level iron bridge of great length, one of the triumphs of engineering in India, beneath which the Jumna, smooth and wide, advances with stately sweep, while, on the further bank, from amongst green foliage, peep the white tapering tops of a Hindoo temple, and the thatched roofs of sleeping bungalows—thus, in the fresh, clear air of early morning, one gets

a first sight of Allahabad. Here, as I had friends, I broke my journey, or, as Americans express it, *lay over* for a day or two. On several occasions subsequently I visited it, but as I then formed my first impressions, I may, as well say what I have to say of it now as elsewhere, for Allahabad, both in fact and in its own opinion, is a place of far too much consideration to be passed over in silence.

The city of Allah has occasionally borne a somewhat less exalted title, that of Fakeerabad, or city of beggars; but if the invidious soubriquet be due to its poverty, and not to the number of religious mendicants, who at certain seasons frequent it, the term is no longer applicable. At present, it is a large and prosperous place, and one of the most rising towns in the country. It is a great railway centre, the Clapham Junction of India in fact, a point strategically of the first importance, and the seat of Government of the North-West Provinces, now including Oude. The existing city is of comparatively modern origin,

dating only from the time of Akbar, the contemporary of our Queen Elizabeth, but it occupies the site of the primeval Prayaga, the capital and most sacred spot of all Hindostan proper—a region embraced within very much the same limits as the provinces of which it is now the metropolis. Situated at the extremity of the Doab—or Mesopotamia of the Ganges and the Jumna, it is its position at their confluence which makes Allahabad rank with Hurdwar,—“the Gate of the Ganges,” Benares, and other hallowed localities of the Hindoo.

The general aspect of “the station” is somewhat flat and formal, dusty and dried-up interminable straight roads, intersected at right angles by other interminable straight roads. Planted on either side, they form broad avenues of over-arching trees—fine in their way, no doubt, but monotonous. During the cold weather the climate is delightful, but in the warm season it bears the evil reputation of being as hot as Tophet. To a stranger, it must be confessed, the North-West capital is

rather dull and devoid of interest, though, to a resident, it is, doubtless, not without attractions of its own. There is Government House, with all the flutter of its petty state—a parody of royalty,—His Honour, monarch of all he surveys, His Honour's lady—a Mofussil queen—one tame aide-de-camp, levees, drawing-rooms, and receptions. The intellectual standard of the station is maintained by a High Court, where the profoundest erudition is displayed in full bench rulings on points of incredible perplexity. While, in the way of less severe amusements, there are constant garden-parties, badmintons, pic-nics, balls, and the Alfred Park—a handsome piece of landscape gardening, undulating sward, with clumps of trees and winding roads, and, in the centre of parterres of flame-bright flowers, a bandstand, with a circular drive. Hither in the late afternoon resort the civil, the gallant, and the fair, to inhale a cooler breeze and to toy a less tardy hour in genial tittle-tattle, or in languid dalliance to the inspiring accompaniment of a military band.

In these high and esoteric diversions the unprivileged outsider can hardly expect to bear a part. For him the one or two features Allahabad possesses of more serious and permanent interest must constitute its true claim to attention. Of them is the fort erected by Akbar, an extensive pile of red sandstone, grimy from age, with high embattled walls, and moated, save where on one side it is washed by the Jumna, above which it towers sheer and lofty. Enclosed within it is a magnificent quadrangle, containing pyramids of ordnance, parks of artillery, and other insignia of glorious war, but of which the most conspicuous object is a monolith of pale yellow sandstone, cylindrical in form, about a yard in diameter, and forty-two feet high, engraven with characters. It belongs to a period so remote as 240 B.C., and is one of the edictal columns of the Buddhist king Asoka. Another curiosity of the fort is its subterranean temple, a dark cavern, dank with the drip of the invisible river Sarsooty, like the lost Pleiad seen of men no more, save only by the

eye of faith. A wretched acolyte, with a dip, who for a few annas acts as guide, points out a dried-up forked piece of timber in a recess of the walls—last remnant of the sacred tree of Prayaga—the deathless banian, that once waved protectingly over the obelisk of Asoka, and which even yet, like Aaron's rod, breaks out into buds and blossoms, once, I forget in how many thousands of years, a sufficiently long period, at any rate, to render the statement safe from controversion. Another relic shown is a large-sized lingam, smooth and black like any other of the phallic emblems of Siva, except that it bears two clefts upon the top, which, like everything else throughout this part of India, are attributed to Akbar, *eo nomine*—The Great. With his sword he smote the rock, and a stream of blood issued therefrom; again he smote the rock, and there proceeded from it a river of milk.

But chief of the sights of Allahabad, that to which it owes its glory in the past, and its importance in the present, is “the meeting of the waters”—

Triveni, not the tryst of two rivers, but the rendezvous of three, for here the Sarsooty, swallowed up in the distant sands of the Sirhind plain, is by the devout Hindoo believed to reappear, after affording moisture to the sacred tree of Prayaga. Very early one morning I took a ticca to the fort, *en route* to this celebrated place of pilgrimage. Making my exit through the Ganges gate, I descended by stairs to a tract of desert, which, in the shape of a wedge, extends about three miles to the point of junction. Proceeding on foot, I followed the margin of the Jumna, plodding wearily through thick sand and mud, and passing on the way a few small groups of bamboo huts with nets hung up to dry—the abodes of fishers. At last I stood upon the holiest spot of ground, the very point or angle of division, my feet laved by the reflux of waters, which were not those of the Jumna, nor yet those of the Ganges, but the commingled waters of the twain. The scene was like a country fair. Upon tall poles of bamboo, resembling Venetian masts, waved many-coloured

banners, with strange devices of beasts and birds, of creeping things, and things that swim, with the grotesque figures of Hindoo deities. In booths upon the shore were displayed lingams of all sizes and cross-legged idols. Land and water were astir with men, women, and children kneeling in prayer upon the bank, drawing the sacred current in bright brazen lotas, washing and bathing in the shallows, clustering upon little stages further out into the stream, or crowding in boats. Strings of yellow flowers defined the outlines of *ultima terra*, while floral wreaths cast as offerings floated upon the waters, which, it must be confessed, were not clear and pure, but dirty and discoloured, as though they held in suspension the sins and defilements which they were supposed to wash away. Apart from its being the holiest spot on earth to millions of human beings, the place was memorable. Here, at length, two mighty and world-renowned rivers, cradled amidst the snows of twin peaks of the far-distant Himalaya, after traversing regions widely

dissevered, coalesce. The Ganges, deep and turbid, scoured the base of a scarped cliff; the Jumna, swift and blue, washed a low green bank, and then their allied waters in one augmented stream, silvered by the light of early morning, swept onward with wide curve through the level landscape, down the great Gangetic valley, towards that Kalapani which finally must engulf them, as well as all streams and rivers, and everything of which they are emblematic.

Allahabad had now but one thing more to show—Kushroobagh, the garden of Kushroo, a large high-walled garden, with pleasant walks, and when I saw it blooming with roses. Within are three very handsome examples of the domed Mahomedan tomb—those of Kushroo, his mother, and sister—ill-starred and rebellious Kushroo, the Indian Absolom—son of Jehangeer, and half brother of Shah Jehan. Over the door of Kushroo's tomb is a frame of very beautiful jallee, or lattice work, in stone, with another corresponding in the opposite wall, through which the sun came stream-

ing, casting its light upon the grave of a sunless life.

With the disappearance of the spire of the white-walled church, piercing far above its encircling foliage, vanished out of sight the last of Allahabad. The prospect was dreary. On either side of the line the country is a boundless, monotonous plain, relieved at intervals only by mud-walled villages amongst trees. To break the tedium of the journey, however, occurred the stoppages along the route, and to a new-comer an Indian railway station always presents a picture to interest. As soon as the train halts, bheesties, or water-carriers with mussocks, or skins of water, on their backs, pass along the carriages, giving the much-prized pani to all who want it. For the mild Hindoo, a Brahmin, indicated by the zennar, or sacred cord across his shoulder, performs the same service; but should anyone outside the pale ask water from him, as new to the country I ignorantly did, the twice-born will disregard the request with a look of ineffable disdain, as

though the charity of a drop of water to such an outcast dying of thirst would involve indelible contamination—such the humanity of that exalted creed! In addition to these, approach the sellers of fruits and sweetmeats, the latter largely patronised by the natives—lumps of very sticky and nasty-looking “delight.” Then there is the bustle and confusion of the many-costumed crowd coming and leaving, with stalwart, turbaned chowkidars or policemen passing up and down to maintain order. Native women, their faces veiled by the white scarf or chuddah that covers their heads, come shambling along, barefooted, with heavy silver anklets and toe-rings, and carrying little naked infants astraddle upon their hips. To give colour to the scene, perhaps there is a rajah *en voyage*, generally a corpulent, elderly gentleman, with tawdry gauds, and rather dirty in his person, but manifestly a man of vast consideration in the eyes of his countrymen, upon whom his display produces an evident effect. He travels in great state, escorted

by nearly all the following of the celebrated "Fhairshon,"—a sword-bearer, with an extraordinary, semi-circular weapon, another retainer with an ancient matchlock, and, most indispensable of all, there is the attendant who carries the old gentleman's chillum, or hubble-bubble pipe. If one gets out and walks along the train, one cannot fail to be struck by the dense mass of humanity, albeit native, packed away in the third and fourth class carriages—huge vans without compartments, through the small iron-barred windows of which they look out like caged wild beasts. Often in the hot weather as many as six or seven dead bodies at a time are dragged out of a single one of these carriages. Such is the parental solicitude of a paternal Government!

The only scenery on the latter portion of the journey that can be called pretty, is in passing through the outskirts of the region of the Raj Mehal hills, the home of the aboriginal Sontals. These are rather low, but broken in outline, seamed with ravines and thick covered

with bright green jungle, and amongst them here and there isolated cones—the Switzerland of Bengal, as some have thought it picturesque enough to be named. After leaving them, more fertile country is gained, stations become more frequent, the towns larger, the land more richly cultivated, and more populous. The vegetation also grows denser and more verdant, evidence of a moister climate. In parts along the line are topes of bamboo; and groves of cocoanut again appear to tell of approximation to the sea.

Finally, at an early hour, the train enters and stops at a station, bigger and busier than any that have gone before. “Howrah” is called out,—its size, commotion and traffic, all announcing the railway terminus of a great city.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CITY OF PALACES.

AND now, Calcutta, what shall I say of you? For one long year and more, I sojourned within the confines of your Mahratta ditch—possibly the most desolate and forsaken months in any man's existence. Recalling that time, I had come, like the son of Beor, prepared to curse, but like him, also, I am constrained to praise you altogether. I should recollect too that that weariness of spirit was purely subjective, and how unfair it would be to make you the unoffending object of my displeasure. Nor can I ever forget, that within your walls I received more kindness and hospitality than I have ever elsewhere met with, and made one or two of the truest friends whom it is given to any to possess. Since I dwelt within your gates, I have seen many regal

cities and many an imperial capital, yet nowhere have I beheld a nobler or statelier than you—Queen city of India, fair Empress of Hindostan. As I look back across the wide waste of time and of distance that now dissevers us, the vision of all your beauty rises afresh before my eyes.

It is the early morning, the sun, a lurid disc, has just topped up above the fringe-crest of cocoa-palms, and I am again upon the Maidan—the Maidan, an immense meadow or open plain of grass, about six miles in circumference, forming a Park or Champ de Mars, the like of which few cities can boast.

I am standing in the centre of it; my face towards the town. In front, constituting an almost unbroken facade, extend the High Court, its towers, and fretted roof,—in design like a Belgian Hotel de ville; the Town-hall with pillared portico, like a Grecian temple; and, railed within its gardens, Government House, with massy pediment and ponderous curving wings. Retired within the city, the dome of the Post Office surmounts all,

while nearer, upon the Maidan itself, rises the tall column of the Ochterlony Monument, serving to remind a Londoner, though with a difference, of St. Paul's and the Nelson Monument.

On the right, in one long, continuous, straight line stretch the palaces of Chowringhee—no thatched bungalows they, but large, square mansions from three to four storeys high, white-walled, with green jillmills, each within its own enclosed compound, amongst its own bright-blossomed trees. True, a nearer aspect would reveal that the marble walls are stucco, and the palaces plaster, peeling and weather-discoloured, but what beauty bears to be “Under the Microscope,” or does not gain an added grace from distance. At the foot of the road, but upon the Maidan, the Cathedral of Heber with its tapering spire projects above the tree tops—a most Gothic piece of churchwarden Gothic—no doubt the architectural *chef d'œuvre* of a Royal Engineer; while, in neighbouring proximity, stands the brick-walled Presidency Jail, locally known as No. 1 Chowringhee, and most conveni-

ently situated in the old days of imprisonment for debt.

On the left, in another long-extended line, a forest of masts seems to grow out of the very grass of the Maidan—the masts of East Indiamen lying stem to stern along the side of the Hooghly, the contour broken here and there by arches and porches upon the bank, that mark the sites of landing and bathing ghauts. Glistening through the rows of spars is visible the broad bosom of the tawny stream, thick sprinkled with dinghees, budgerows, and other craft, drifting up or down upon the tide, and beyond, the dark low length of the further shore, fringed to the verge with groves of cocoa-trees. About the middle, and on the edge of this side of the Maidan, stands that redoubtable stronghold—"Fort William, in Bengal," with windmill-like tower, and star-pointed angles, as quaint and almost as inoffensive as the scarps and counterscarps that Trim and Uncle Toby used to construct upon the bowling-green at Shandy. Poor Fort William! whose guns ingloriously

making day hideous, keep up a perpetual cannonade to proclaim to an awe-inspired city each going out and coming in, each sitting down and rising up of a Governor-General or a Lieutenant-Governor—a profligacy in saltpetre that might well be dispensed with, if not on account of its childishness, at least for thrift's sake in these days of Indian insolvency.

At my back are the buildings of the Military Hospital—the old Sudder Court, and, upon a grassy rise, the green woods and church spire of Alipore—the Alipore of Warren Hastings.

•Behind this breast-work, as it were, in rear of Government House, is the mercantile quarter, with squares and streets of palatial offices, shops, and godowns. Even at this early hour, could one look beyond, the roadways are blocked with hackeries piled with bales of merchandise—long narrow waggons drawn by little humpbacked cream-coloured oxen, and the side walks covered with bustling crowds, jostling through which palkis make their way—those gondolas of Calcutta,

long, coffin-like black boxes, borne by a pole on the shoulders of two coolies, at either extremity, who go along at a jog-trot, jerking their elbows, and keeping time to a dolorous dirge — the lugubrious wail of the palkiwallah. In another direction, are the bazaars of native artificers and shopmen, teeming with life—the Black Town as it is called—with innumerable small cross streets, or lanes of busties, mud-wattled hovels, with fetid drains and open cesspools, where cholera and fever are endemic. Not that the authorities are to be blamed for that so much as the ineradicably filthy habits of the natives, for few cities possess better sanitary arrangements, as exemplified by its systems of water supply, sewage, and abattoirs.

My eyes now turn to look on the Maidan itself. Long lines of drives, bordered with trees, intersect it, and broad cinnamon-coloured, balustraded walks. Large, square, white-railed tanks glimmer upon its surface, like miniature lakes. Equestrian statues in bronze of Governor-Generals and other

celebrities occupy coigns of vantage—most notable of all that dramatic effigy of Outram, both horse and rider, instinct with life and action. It must be conceded that Indian public men are particularly happy in their opportunity of monumental recognition, India, perhaps, being the only country where a statue is not a posthumous honour, but where a living man can be the critic of his own monument. Possibly these may be considered lacking in the one element that usually gives value to such rewards, that of spontaneity, and to be too much the creatures of official inspiration or mutual co-operative admiration,—but that is sheer captiousness.

Passing from these, my attention is attracted by bodies of troops—turbaned Sikhs and white-helmeted British, marching and counter marching, bayonets glittering, and bands playing. The heavy cavalry are out for their morning constitutional, Sabs and Mem Sabs on raw-boned Walers ploughing round the race-course. Strings of coolies, bare-legged and scantily attired, are

already wending to their day's work, or returning from the bathing ghauts. Beside a tank, the eye rests upon a group of Bengali women drawing water—tall and slender, with delicate bangled-
wrists and ankles, their only garment the sari, of apparel most elegant—a long scarf of gauzy, diaphonous white muslin, with a narrow pink border, wrapped in width three or four times round the waist, so as to come a little below the knee, and then one end brought over shoulders and head across the bosom. To see her thus, with bright brazen lota poised upon her small classic head, what more graceful or sculpturesque, save the feathery palm under which she poses?

Or the rays of the sun are beginning to lose their power; and, succeeding to the torrid hotness of the day, the cooling sea breeze has sprung up, when captive Calcutta, with all its wealth of equipage, turns out to breathe again. The drive is up and down the course, a broad, straight roadway between the Maidan and Fort William on one side, and the line of ships and the Hooghly on the other. The

carriages, packed three abreast, are almost as plentiful, and the pace as slow, as in the Lady's Mile at the height of the season. True, the indications of wealth are certainly less overpoweringly profuse, and rank and fashion represented by rather humbler votaries than in Hyde Park, but in mere picturesqueness of spectacle, the comparison is all in favour of the Eastern city. There is the shipping the whole way moored alongside, the yards almost overhanging the drive, the wide reach of burnished river, the low jungle-fringed shore opposite, and the firmament beyond all ablaze with the rich golds and reds of sunset, as though sky and river did but reflect the city's own combustion. The human stream too has less of sameness. Native ladies, gorgeous with brocade and cloth of gold, flit past in gharris with half-closed windows, while, in open barouches and pairs, languidly recline their European sisters, pallid, but beautiful, with that pallor that has given to Calcutta its alternative title of "The City of Pale Faces." How infinitely better adapted to pictorial effect are the turbaned kooch-

man and the syces, a couple behind each carriage, the latter holding chowries, made from the tail of the Thibetan yak to whisk away the flies, than their London analogues the liveried lackeys of the Row. A slight interruption of the even tenor—it is the Governor-General, who comes bowling along in a chariot and four, *en postillon*, preceded and followed by his mounted body-guard, Titanic Sowars, clad in scarlet uniforms, with clanking tulwars by their sides. Then, as the sun has sunk, and, in that twilightless land, immediate darkness fallen upon the scene, the carriages are all ranked alongside the Eden Gardens—gardens so lovely that fancy might well feign them named after the lost ones of Paradise. A lake spreads itself throughout them, its ramifications spanned by rustic bridges. Upon the turf of its sloping banks cluster trees, which at seasons are laden with waxy flowers, white and yellow, that load the air with heavy, cloying scent. In their midst, for a summer-house, rises a Burmese pagoda, its base guarded by grotesque monsters. Another portion is laid out as

an oblong lawn. It is here, when the sun has set and the evening drive is over, while the sward is lit by soft light from semi-opaque lamps, and sometimes the moon sailing overhead makes all things clear as at noonday, the masts of the shipping seeming to mingle with the trees of the garden, that the band plays, and the beauty and fashion of the palatial city promenade up and down in quadrille fashion, the carpet of turf as thickly crowded and gay as the floor of a ballroom. Hard by, more indolent loveliness leans back in her carriage, leisurely listening. With the last notes of "God save the Queen," the vivacious throng reseats itself, and then, amid a crashing of wheels and the flashing, like fireflies, of a myriad lamps, there is an instant dispersion, over the wide expanse of the Maidan, now outlined round by an enormous circuit of lights, back to the palaces of Clive Street and the mansions of Chowringhee—all intent to dine, great consummation of an Indian day!

Whatever sins may be laid at the door of Calcutta society, it certainly cannot fairly be

charged with inhospitality. Possibly there is no more hospitable city in the world. Not only is the newcomer entitled, but he is expected, to call upon the older residents. The visiting hours are between twelve and two, the hottest and most inconvenient portion of the day, because in the East it is an article of faith that there can be no attention that does not entail the maximum of personal discomfort. During these hours you take your buggy, a hooded sort of cabriolet, and drive, say, to one of the aforesaid palaces of Chowringhee. If the gate of the compound be closed—"Durwaza bund,"—the lady is not at home; if open—"Durwaza kholo,"—she is receiving visitors. Suppose the latter, you enter the compound, a beautiful garden, verdant with tropical plants, containing a square tank with turfy slopes, the porch a hanging garden of orchids. The porter (durwan) at the outer gate has announced your approach by a stroke upon his gong, and on your arrival at the front door a hurkura or messenger is there awaiting you. "Mem Sab hai?" you say (Is the

lady in ?) “Hai Sab” (Yes, sir, she is). Your cards are taken up on a salver, and the answer comes back, “Mem Sab salaam dia” (The lady of the house sends you her compliments). Crossing the black-and-white chequered marble hall floor you ascend the stairs. In the centre of a capacious drawing-room, dim and cool, the Venetians carefully closed to exclude the light, and the heat light brings, Mem Sab is faintly discerned, seated like a queen receiving the homage of her subjects. To her you make approach, and render obeisance. Most probably there is a Sab there already, but very soon after your arrival, he takes his departure, while you remain, and^u indulge in a few commonplaces about the unusual heat, or exceptional coolness of the weather, or on some other equally unexciting topic of Calcutta conversation. Fresh cards are carried in, and as their owner appears, you shake hands, and, bowing, make your exit. If you have made yourself *bien vu*, and the requirements are not enacting, you are sure, within the next few days, to get an invitation to that not least sacred

and solemn of Anglo-Indian institutions—a Burrah Khana. If not, with a bow or two afterwards on the course, the acquaintance drops, and no harm is done. Supposing yourself honoured, you don yourself, though it may be hotter than the dog days, with the thermometer at 90 under the punkah, in broad cloth from top to toe. In old times they made their bow in black coats, and then the lady of the house considerably suggested to her guests that they might retire and exchange them for white jackets. Now, however, to appear even in white trousers is an unpardonable solecism; such is the preposterous affectation of maintaining English manners and customs, amid dissimilar and unsuitable conditions. I daresay what first strikes you, and not agreeably, on entering the room, is the melancholy preponderance of black coats. All sections of society are represented, civilians, from the lordly collector to the lowly wallah just out, barristers in large practice, and heads of great mercantile houses. In arranging the order of going down to dinner, there is much stickling

on points of precedence, so much, that you would fain exclaim with Lady Macbeth,—“Stand not upon the order of your going, but go at once.” To your surprise, the adolescent wallah takes down the last lady, while leading barristers and opulent merchants follow unmated at their heels. But so it is, a hard-and-fast line divides Calcutta society. There are the official, or “*Simla people*,” as they call themselves, who talk of “*one of us* ;” and, on the other side, the “*Calcutta people*,” professional and mercantile, who are “*not of us*,”—“interlopers” was the good old-fashioned word. With the first breath of the south wind, the former decamp, bag and baggage, at Government expense, to the Indian Olympus, from whose serene heights they are wont to look down with divine disdain upon the humble toilers in the steaming plains beneath. Thus has developed a system of caste inflexible and illiberal as its native archetype, a system which has for its ineffable “twice born” the civilian, that Anglo-Brahmin, and counts every other as a social pariah. Upon one occasion, while I was in Calcutta, this

phenomenon received an amusing illustration. The story went round that, at a ball or soiree, the wife of a civilian had gravely remonstrated with the Chief Justice for his want of self-respect, in being seen talking with a barrister's wife in public. The Chief Justice was reported to have mildly deprecated that he was only a barrister himself. Perhaps when that amiable lady—no doubt, the wife of the son of an ambitious *épicier*—goes home, she will learn wisdom, if not charity. "Home" is a great taker-down of Anglo-Indian official pretension—England so happily constituted that it cannot distinguish between a Collector and a debt collector. As a merchant once said to me in Calcutta, "The Collector of so-and-so invariably treats me with great pomposity out here; but I never mind, *I always have my revenge out of him when we meet, on a wet day, in the Brompton omnibus.*"

Of native society, the European in India never even obtains a glimpse. Not only do European and native not consort on terms of superiority and inequality, as do the former among themselves; but there is not, nor can there be, any social inter-

course between them. This I have often heard in England, with that misapprehension which marks nearly all home criticism of Indian matters, charged to the haughty exclusiveness of the dominant race, as it is called. On the contrary, I believe that very many of the English would quite willingly associate with the natives, giving and receiving hospitality, and that for this mutual social estrangement it is the native who is almost wholly to blame, or rather responsible. What social intercourse can there be with a people who will neither eat nor drink with you, and some of whom would throw away their food as polluted, if your shadow chanced to fall upon it; or where the ladies, immured in the recesses of the Zenana, are never permitted to be seen of man, even of their own race? Occasionally, it is true, native gentlemen are to be met at balls or evening parties at the houses of Europeans; but with regard to the former species of entertainment, it is felt that they are out of place, as they hold dancing in the same estimation as the Romans did play-acting, and

with them the only dancers are women of an abandoned class. • Of such professional dancing they are, however, particularly fond, celebrating domestic festivals by a nautch, to which not unfrequently they invite Europeans. Once upon an occasion of that kind I was present at a great nautch, given by a very wealthy native at his country-house, near Calcutta—a magnificent rococo mansion, built by some Italian or French architect. The interior exhibited all that splendour, or rather splendaciousness, combined with tawdriness, so characteristic of native taste, especially when directed to European objects of art, the walls being profusely decorated with French lithographs of highly-coloured *décolletées*, ladies, and cheap-jack mirrors. In one of the larger rooms, with divans and cushions spread upon the floor, the company, European and native, luxuriously reclined, smoking hookahs and cigarettes, and drinking coffee, that was handed to the guests, with exquisite grace, by the little sons of the entertainer. Native children are certainly wonderfully pretty, and while

unprecocious and perfectly childlike, have that admirable composure of manner that with us is only to be found in men of the world. Presently, in came the ladies of the nautch, the graces in number, but in nothing else, neither very fair nor very young, attended by their inseparable companions, a man with a tom-tom, another with a fife, and the third with a three-stringed sort of fiddle. All took their station on a carpet at the near end of the room. The ladies were gorgeously attired in heavy brocaded silks and satins, loaded with gems and jewels, rings in their noses, rings in their ears, rings on their fingers, and rings on their toes, about their necks were chains of gold and ropes of pearl entwined amongst their hair. Often they have several lakhs' worth of trinkets upon their persons at a time, for they invest all their earnings in jewellery, and constantly receive from their native admirers *cadeaux* that would open the eyes of the most lavish of our young Alcibiades. The dancing itself was monotonous to the last degree, consisting entirely of raising

and dropping the arms, shuffling the feet, and turning round—posturing more than dancing. Not an inch of ankle even was displayed the whole time, its perfect propriety amounted to stupidity, prudery itself could not have been shocked, and a missionary might have looked on with complete edification. Meanwhile the men with the tom-tom, the fife, and the fiddle were evoking the most frightful cacophonies, music of all others being the subject on which natives and Europeans have the most radically opposed ideas,—and the ladies were droning a nasal chant as harmonious, if not as uproarious, as the Irish melodies at a wake. Natives can sit and attend to these performances with apparently rapt delight for hours together, and as the dancers act and sing a story, totally unintelligible to all excepting the most Indianised aliens, it may have elements of interest for them, but, to most Europeans, a very little nautch goes a very long way, and they seldom care to witness a repetition. A magnificent supper, laid in an adjoining room, of all kinds of European viandsa

and wines, to which our host politely bowed us, but at which he could not allow himself to be present, concluded the festivity according to Western notions.

There is another kind of nautch, not so frequently exhibited, but which I once saw in a more private fashion, called "the Snake Dance," from the movements of the dancers being in imitation of the motions of the snake. The coryphées, berobed and bedizened from head to foot (just as before), exposed themselves quite as little as in the other, and their motions, more than Ionic in their softness, were even slower and more subdued, but such were the sinuosities of body, the undulatory swaying to and fro and from side to side, the gliding and trailing of the limbs, the snaky wavings of the arms, the serpentine twistings and twinings of wrist, hand, and finger, and such the alternate glow of passion and lassitude of dulled satiety in the eyes, that it was, beyond everything, the most sensuous species of saltation I have ever witnessed, incomparably more dissolute than the Mænad frenzy of the Can-can, or the stark nudity of the forfeit-dance of Japan.

But the best view of native life open to a European is that afforded by the courts of law—in Calcutta the High Court. Within its entrances is a splendid quadrangle, with a pyramid of tropical vegetation in the centre, and a lofty arched colonnade on all sides. Upstairs, an open gallery runs round, from which the various courts branch off. The corridors are thronged with suitors from far and near, brought together upon every conceivable question of right and wrong, and intermingling with them black-robed advocates, attorneys, pleaders, vakeels, and mooktiars. Inside the airy chambers, so clean and cool, with peeps out over the greenery of the Maidan, the walls hung with oil portraits of Impey, Macnaghten, and other lights of the Calcutta bench, the great punkahs, occupying the full breadth of the court, like huge weavers' beams, are slowly swinging backwards and forwards over the heads of judge and counsel, the advocate addressing the court unconsciously keeping up a rhythmic movement of body in unison with the punkah, to preserve the arrangement of his unbewigged locks. Indian

courts of justice are the same favourite resorts of the populace as at home. Collected at the back of the court, public opinion squats upon its haunches, ruminating the unfailing betel nut. Red-coated chuprassis of the High Court are standing about ready to go messages, and *lal pugree wallahs*, as the police are called from the colour of their headgear, to maintain order. But who is this, most conspicuous figure of all, evident lord of the situation, strutting and crowing about, like chanticleer upon his mound of fertilizers? It is that ultimate triumph of humanity, our friend the Bengali Baboo, who is here to be observed in fullest glory. As obese and overgrown as the Claimant, his vast bulk is clothed in a tunic of the finest and most spotless calico, with a scarf of gauze over his shoulder to wipe his exuding brow; upon his locks, oleaginous with cocoa oil, is set a hat like an enlarged platter; his huge swollen calves are bare, and the feet of our *bourgeois gentilhomme* are encased in neat white socks and polished leather shoes. In his hand is a bundle of law papers. A look of serene

self-satisfaction and omniscient wisdom overspreads the acreage of his shaven countenance, upon which also beams a smile that is "child-like and bland," for, in comparison with our guileless Gentoo, "the heathen Chinese" is but an unsophisticated innocent after all. What picture of the Capital of Bengal could pretend to completeness without a sketch, however feeble, of that most characteristic and most priceless of its products—its own inimitable and incomparable Bengali Baboo!

To turn to the litigation; perhaps the case is a dispute, in which these great traffickers, Marwarie merchants are concerned, olive-skinned gentlemen with pink turbans. What wonderful books of accounts do they produce, the pages several feet in length, and covered with columns of minutest figures and characters—kept according to their complicated system of dates, the months divided into the light side and the dark side of the moon. Maybe the suit relates to a joint Hindoo family and the partition of the ancestral property. The table of the court literally groans with barbaric

pearl and gold, the ornaments of the domestic gods, themselves jewels, and the trinkets of the ladies of the household, in value lakhs and lakhs of rupees, at which the natives gaze agape with open eyes. Presently there is a little disturbance in the decorum of the proceedings, a palki is carried in and deposited near the witness-box. Within is a *purdah nasheen*, who has come to give evidence as to the family affairs, thus called because she is never allowed to see the light of day, save as it may percolate to her through the arras of a screen, so sacred her person that, at one time, it was considered inviolable to even the process of court. A slide of the palki is pushed back half-an-inch and the court interpreter repeats the question to her, in response to which, scarcely audible, comes a voice, still and small as the voice of conscience. Fancy is at play, and false no doubt to the reality, invests the veiled beauty with all the charms and graces of a Krishna Komari or a Noor Jehan. An Indian court of justice in truth is both a picture and a poem.

Or again the court is sitting in the exercise

of its criminal jurisdiction, the judge in awful scarlet on the bench, behind an iron rail, the prisoner—a cowering coolie, with matted locks, naked but for a loin cloth, with hands, palms together, in front of his face—a supplicatory attitude he will maintain for hours on end without a shadow of turning. He has hacked his mistress to little bits with a dhow or billhook, that is all. Being a capital case, the clerk of the Crown has requested some unfortunate advocate to undertake the hopeful defence. The witnesses (of the same rank in life as the accused) are utterly impossible of cross examination. All the forensic skill of an Erskine or a Follett would be set at naught. Inquire as to any little natural circumstance within their knowledge that you think may aid you,—say the darkness of the night. All the answer you can elicit will be, “You had better ask God; He made the night, not I. God can tell you; how can I?”—judge, counsel, and interpreter may all come down upon him together, not a jot will they ever get him to budge from that response. At length, after

blindly fishing about, you discover that there had been a quarrel—jealousy, of course. In reply to his taunts, the woman had abused him with flowers of rhetoric as could only drop from a Bengali tongue, or that of an Australasian politician. That is nothing ; she had assailed his father, a little better ; better still, she had not spared his female relatives ; and, best of all, some fourteen or fifteen generations of female ancestors had been embraced in her sweeping vituperation. To have his female kin vilified is what no Hindoo can be expected to stand, and the abuse gains in force the further back it reaches. Happy coolie with a long pedigree ! The jury find that there has been that grave and sudden provocation that reduces the offence to culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

Like other large cities, Calcutta, of course, has its holiday resorts, the most beautiful by far of which, in the immediate neighbourhood, are the Botanical Gardens, a short way further down on the opposite side of the river, which sweeps their front. They are of large extent, and chiefly attractive from their

pleasing combination of the natural and the artificial. In one part, its rolling sward is thickly planted as an arboretum, with such valuable timber trees as teak, sissoo, saul, toon, besides those of numberless other species. In another portion, upon its even surface, converge, to a graceful cupola, containing a classic marble vase, straight narrow lanes, precisely planted with palms on either side. In one alley all are with scaly rinds and shaggy tops, in another the stems are smooth and tapered, like elephants' tusks, tufted with broad, glossy leaves,—the talipat, I think. Those palm avenues, dwarf as yet, have a very prim and formal, though wonderfully picturesque effect. Another feature of the garden is its famous banian, one of the largest in India, with countless downward rooting branches, under which a regiment might bivouac. The view from the river front is particularly imposing, across the broad gilded stream to the great mansions standing white amid their green gardens down to the water's edge—the once famed palaces of Garden Reach, the homes of chief justices and merchant princes of former

days, but now diverted to inferior uses (the largest to be the seraglio of the deposed monarch of Oude), and fast disappearing before encroaching wharfs and invading jute mills. Up stream, on the further circumference of the great circle of green, glisten the goodly towers and spires and masts of central Calcutta. More distant resorts are Dum Dum with its races, and Barrackpore with its park and country-seat of the Governor-General. But favourite of all, to which the "Ditchers" oftenest go, to break the tedium of their uneventful lives, is the little French settlement of Chandernagore. On one occasion, to beguile a weary hour, I communicated an account of a visit there to one of the Calcutta papers, which, as Chandernagore cannot be left unsung, and I do not care to compose a newer strain, I insert here, as an end to what I have to say of the City of Palaces.

A SUNDAY AT CHANDERNAGORE.

Have you ever met with a decayed gentlewoman? I have, but not so often now as

formerly. The species is becoming rare as the gentlewoman herself, who has not suffered decomposition, is fast disappearing before the Girl of the Period and the Modern Matron. Even yet, however, you may fall in with her occasionally. The suburbs and the seaside are her favourite resorts. In the more retired parts of Peckham or Clerkenwell, you will find her letting apartments to single gentlemen who are engaged in the city during the day. One comes upon her at Ramsgate or Deal, where she hires out her house—each floor to a family—for the summer months, while she sleeps in the attics next door to the maid-of-all-work—that hapless universal drudge, and superintends the cooking below stairs. How faultlessly clean is her abode; not a speck of dust anywhere, you could not pick up a crumb from the carpet. But the chill air of pinching poverty hangs about the place—the struggle to make both ends meet is too painfully apparent. The sofa, black horse hair and yellow mahogany, the big sea shells upon the chimney piece, the empty cruet on the

sideboard, and, in the bitterest weather, the fire-irons, bright steel and polished brass, a fantail screen, cut out of coloured paper before the grate—these are a few of her usual surroundings. For herself there is an emaciated half-starved look about her. A physician would prescribe a liberal, nourishing diet, and a glass or two of sound, full-bodied port daily at dinner, without concerning himself to inquire how the wherewithal was to be procured. Her dress, when it is not a rusty black silk, is generally, like the wearer, sad coloured; but how scrupulously clean it is, and how neatly put on. You never saw her venture out that her hands were not cased in gloves, mended, to be sure, in many a place, and sometimes a little open at the finger-tips. Her whole appearance betokens that she has seen better days. Listen to her,—the voice is low and soft, she never speaks above a whisper. No one ever heard her laugh; at most a smile blended with sadness will flit across her face, as a gleam of sunshine lights up for an instant a landscape lying in shadow. If

you are of the proper stamp, she calls out all the chivalry of the man that is in you, instinctively you stand before her, hat in hand, and address her in tones of marked deference.

What the decayed gentlewoman is amongst her sex, that Chandernagore is among towns. Once fondly designed by French ambition to be the metropolis of India, it has sadly come down in the world. It looks a little out at elbows, and has about it a shabby-genteel sort of an air. Ichabod, if much of glory it ever could boast, is inscribed upon its walls, and upon its windows "the light of other days is shining." A long straight row of white buildings, relieved by the greenery of a few trees, close upon the Hooghly, whose glassy waters sweep past in broad bends and ample reaches, a spacious esplanade with carriageway and trottoir in front, behind, and parallel with the main street, another considerable thoroughfare, and intersecting them a few lanes, there you have the physical structure of Chandernagore.

What odd and mixed sensations does this strange

little town give rise to in a casual visitor. You appear suddenly to have stepped back into a former century, and been transported into another country. The place seems to have fallen asleep with Rip Van Winkle, and not yet to have roused itself from its long hibernation. How noiseless are its streets, no carriages rolling about, and how clean they are. The silence is broken only by the tolling of a bell, or the chiming of a clock. How is it that in old-world places such as this the bells are always soft, and the chimes tuneful? Walk along the esplanade, *Quai Dupleix*, it is called, suggesting the days when the great Frenchman of that name strove with Clive for supremacy in Hindostan, the language that meets the ear is not English, nor yet Bengali, it is that of *la grande nation*; the dresses of the ladies, however costless, have that style, that indefinable something that is peculiar to the female costume of one people. Look up, from the square tower there, the tricolor is waving over you. A turn and you are in the *Rue de la Paix*, the *Rue Rivoli*, or the *Rue de Paris*—little lanes—surely if this be the capital of *La belle*

France, there has been a wonderful transformation since we were here last. The standing army now comes upon the scene ; a generalissimo-in-chief, a corporal, and two full privates in threadbare Zouave uniform, a single musket between them, and that weapon of war of the time of the *Grand Monarque*.

A hotel brings you to one end—SANS SOUCI writ large upon it as though in bitter mockery. *Atra Cura* which, as well as her twin sister *Pallida Mors*, enters every dwelling, has crossed its threshold. The place is to let—in legal phraseology is being wound up. *Sans souci*, thy abode was just as much here as in the palace of the great Fritz, and if it exists upon earth, it has yet, like the North Pole, to be discovered !

The sinking sun was flushing the placid river with a purple tinge as I observed a small procession emerging under the gateway of a large-sized building, which bore upon it that it was the convent school of a religious sisterhood dedicated to Marie l'Immaculée. The little band came along in twos ; in advance small children, tapering backwards to

maidens just about to take leave of their teens, the rear being brought up by black-gowned sisters. Slowly they wended their way to a Catholic chapel, whither we followed, and in the dim-fading light heard them chant the Litany of Loretto. At the conclusion of the service a *tableau* was presented quite dramatic, and even more effective than the opening scene of Robertson's "School," which somehow or another it recalled. On leaving the church the little procession, the juniors still leading the way, passed close before the altar, and as each couple came in front of it, they made reverence—the little ones with slight timid sideward bow, the elder girls full fronting to the altar with deep genuflexion. Ah! my friend, whether in that half-averted little nod or in that profound obeisance there lay the truer adoration, neither you or I can tell! Through the gathering darkness we watched them silently disappear in the direction of their nunnery, and I was reminded of the school of my good friend, Fraulein Fink and the Dom Kirche in old Frankfurt-on-the-Maine.

If any one should wish to rid himself for a little while of the opulent bustle of Calcutta, its modern contemporaneousness, and for a brief space to sojourn in the sad serenity of the past, let him take the early train to the quondam Danish settlement of Serampore,—there breakfast, and then, embarking in a *dinghee*, glide up the broad tranquil stream flowing between its low banks, clothed with wavy bamboo, the tall tufted cocoa palm, and the broad-leaved plantain, and melancholy musing on the mutability of all things mundane do as we did, spend—a Sunday at Chandernagore.

C H A P T E R V.

AT THE HILLS.

THOUGH of recent origin, comparatively with the time that the English have been in the country, hill stations are fast becoming, if they have not actually become, one of the most prominent and indispensable institutions of Anglo-India. To each Presidency, Province, and Government is attached its own particular sanitarium. Simla is the exclusive domain of the Government of India, Poonah belongs to Bombay, Ootacamund to Madras, Bengal possesses Darjeeling, the North-West go to Naini Tal, Mussoorie happily is non-official and cosmopolitan, and for the Punjab there are Murree and Dhurumsala. To each of these, besides holiday visitors, resort their regular frequenters, principally ladies and children, who spend "*the cold weather*" in "*the plains*," and "*the hot weather*" in

"the hills," and by means of such periodic migrations, manage to secure for themselves, perhaps, the healthiest and most enjoyable climates in the world. In addition, however, to these birds of passage, the seeds have already been sown in these various settlements, along the base of the Himalaya, and other parts of mountainous India, of a more permanent population of English, largely to increase hereafter, who, with an occasional excursion to the plains during the colder months of winter, intend to make them their homes, in which to live and die. Nor if an invigorating climate amidst the most stupendous scenery in nature go to make life desirable, are they to be commiserated so much as congratulated. Neither, from some specimens I saw, need there be any apprehension of the physical deterioration of the race so circumstanced. I cannot help thinking that the multiplication and increase of such colonies must, and might much more, be made to play a most important part in the future of India.

I had now been in Calcutta upwards of eight

months. The climate had begun to tell upon me. During the cold weather, it is as delightful as any upon earth—Paradise in fact—but the last part of the hot weather, and especially "*the rains*," are just the other thing. The wind, which is simply the breath of one's life, has died away, till the air has become as motionless as a vacuum, the ground has become sodden with warm drizzling rain, constant but for the intermission of a few hours, when the sun blazes out in all its fury, sucking up the moisture in the form of muggy misty vapour, while a scent of universal mildew pervades the atmosphere. Suppose the innermost room of a Turkish bath, or the palm house at Kew Gardens, with their temperature intensified, and then imagine yourself living in such an atmosphere night and day for three or four months, bathed in perpetual perspiration, and that will give you some idea, though an inadequate one, of the Calcutta climate at that season. Towards the last, it becomes with everyone a struggle for life, a question whether one can hold on to the end. Your

acquaintances look pale and emaciated, with dark circles under the eyes, as though they had just risen from beds of long sickness. Then is it that people, as it is called, "go out" suddenly. A friend asks you to dine with him to-morrow, and, as you are taking your evening walk, before going home to dress, you meet a funeral. On inquiring whose it is, to your horror you are told that your host that was to be is being carried to his grave. In these latitudes death treads upon the heels of life, and burial follows close after death. For myself, I had had an attack or two of fever, become a victim to prickly heat, been perforated with boils; pains about my right shoulder blade told me too distinctly that my liver was beginning to be touched; a digestion that had never previously faltered now commenced to work with friction; and, although I had arrived in pretty firm condition, I had lost a stone and a half in weight. How often during these last weeks did I lift my eyes to those hills from which relief was to come, and at length, thanks to the goddess Dourga and the

Poojas in her honour, when the period of my release had arrived, with what rapturous joy was it welcomed.

It had been a matter of no small difficulty, which of all these mountain resorts I should select as the scene of my vacation. With regard to one of them, I had no trouble in making a negative choice, and that was Simla, the single place in the whole of India I never had any curiosity to visit. From the *haut pas* of superior official dignity, it affects to look down on all the others. There bureaucracy in *excelsis* struts and frets its hour upon the stage, and little brief authorities play fantastic tricks that make the angels laugh. I had no wish to be confirmed a cynic or a misanthrope by becoming a spectator of the pusillanimities of official man, in sharp contrast with the sublimities of nature, so I shunned the self-styled Indian Capua. Fate or fatality directed my steps to a lowlier resort, I do not say to the prettiest of them all, for I have not been to all, though I have seen several of the others since, but this I will aver, that, if not the most beautiful, there is none lovelier

than the one hill station that boasts its little green Himalayan lake.

Forty-eight hours of fatiguing railway travel, hot and dusty, found me at Moradabad, at night, pretty well exhausted, my destination, Naini Tal, being still some eighty or ninety miles distant. From that point the journey is continued some sixty or ninety miles by dak. The conveyance is not unlike a London growler, and is drawn by a pair of little horses or ponies, in relays along the route. To make arrangements to be taken on in this mode, is in Indian parlance called *laying a dak*. About the middle of the night, as I was dozing off to sleep, I was suddenly aroused by a violent breakdown, and found that the axle had snapped and the wheel come off. Being my first experience of a dak, I was greatly disgusted; but one very soon gets used to these little *contretemps*, and comes to regard them as pleasing variations in the monotony of dak travel. Moradabad was left too far behind to walk back to it, and there was no place ahead within reach, while, to make matters worse, the vehicle was tilted in such a

fashion as to put rest in it out of the question. There was nothing for it, therefore, but, like a sentry, to pace up and down the dusty road, through the hours of the sultry night, waiting for dawn, and another gharry, which they told me could not arrive before six or seven in the morning. Fretting and fuming, or, in Indian phrase "*budmashing and soorkabutchaing*," as one may well suppose, I don't think I ever had a worse time of it in the course of my life. At last day dawned, and, tardier still, another conveyance appeared, and the journey was thankfully resumed. We were passing through the Terai, a broad belt of impenetrable jungle lying their whole extent between the hills and the plains—the home of all kinds of beasts and birds of prey, and, of much more to be dreaded, malarious fever. By-and-by from afar loomed into view low, round-topped hills, densely wooded, the first in the series of those which, range upon range, roll up to the snowy central chain of the Himalayas. It was well on in the afternoon before, more slowly, the gharry began to wind its way up and through a defile in this

primary slope, coming finally to a halt, at the dak bungalow of Kaladungie, where the journey by dak ends, and I was to stay the night.

As it was here that I made my first acquaintance with a dak bungalow, in many a one of which I afterwards found shelter, I may as well now explain to those who do not know it what a dak bungalow is. They are rest houses for travellers, maintained by Government, and are scattered all through the country, along the high-roads, about ten miles, or a stage, apart. One-storeyed buildings, generally cottage in shape, with verandahs, they are often most picturesquely perched on knolls, with grass plots in front. Besides the bare walls, they contain merely deal chairs and tables, together with charpoys, a four-legged frame, filled in with webbing. In India, the traveller always carries his own bedding, usually a rezai or quilt, a bundle of rugs, and a pillow. In the guzalkhana, or bath-room, there is the indispensable tub, flanked with gurras, globes of red unglazed earthenware filled with water standing to cool, which in bathing one lifts

and pours over the head, luxuriously and refreshingly. A khansamah, or caterer, is in charge. Afar off, he lifts up his eyes, and beholds the approaching traveller. As you draw nigh, upon the patch of grass in front may be observed the flapping of wings, and a loud cackling heard. Anhungered, you at once inquire what there is to eat. The khansamah is a man of boundless promises, and, as he answers "Everything, whatever your high mightiness may choose to demand from your unworthy slave," you rub your hands with anticipated relish. You interrogate him a little more specifically, "Machli hai?" Is there any fish?—"Machli neh hai, Sab," There is no fish; "Gosht hai?" Is there any meat?—"Gosht neh hai, Sab," There is no meat; "Unda hai?" Are there any eggs?—"Unda neh hai, Sab," There are no eggs; "Dood hai?" Is there any milk?—"Dood neh hai, Sab," There is no milk. Lastly, with a slight crescendo of voice, you ejaculate, "Kia hai?" What is there? comes the triumphant answer, "Mourgi hai, Sab," There is fowl. That fowl is the one whose flapping and cackling attracted

your attention on approach, whose throat is already cut and feathers plucked in readiness for your repast, and that fowl, when cooked, is known among Indians as "sudden death." However profuse at first may be the professions of the khansamah, experience teaches that the inevitable end is "sudden death." There is this to be said, however, that a mourgi curried, stewed, or en côtelettes, as turned out by an adroit dak bungalow khansamah, is by no means to be despised. Often, in wandering in other lands, have I exclaimed a fervent wish for the good old dak bungalow khansamah, and his "sudden death." All provisions are supplied according to a printed tariff or nirik, approved by the head civil authority of the district. The small charge of a rupee per night is made for accommodation, which on leaving one enters with one's name, and any remarks, of the usual invaluable character, in the khitab, a book kept for the purpose. A code of well-considered rules is posted up, one of which provides that in case the dak bungalow be full, a person who has sojourned therein for twenty-four hours is obliged

to turn out for a subsequent arrival,—a most necessary regulation, as dak bungalows are intended solely for *bond fide* travellers. Altogether the dak bungalow is a most admirable institution, and the one, perhaps, upon which the justification of a paternal Government may be most safely based.

There are few rest-houses with a more beautiful situation than the one at Kaladungie. It is placed on a small plateau on the top of the first rise, amongst thick woods and grassy clearings, coursed by cold, sparkling streams, while, above it and around it, are the tree-clad hill-tops. Here, already, the air was cool, the foliage also had changed back to that of old friends again—rhododendrons and conifers. In the evening I took a walk along the road I was to go on the morrow. The keen air coming from over the snows of the Himalaya, filled my lungs and seemed to intoxicate me. It was worth while to have been pent all these months in the stifling vapour of Calcutta, with its fevers and its boils, to enjoy the ecstasy of again drinking in those copious draughts of cooling air. As to

Antæus contact with mother-earth, so to me these native mountain breezes renewing me with life, bringing elasticity to my step, and making me to sing at the top of my voice for very joy as up hill and down dale I advanced among the pine-scented woods. I must have got half-way to Naini Tal, fifteen miles off, before it occurred to me to turn back, and then only with regret that I was unprepared to go right on. As it was, I returned without the slightest sense of fatigue, and after a chat with another traveller, sitting in the verandah, with the stars twinkling frosty bright in front, retired to rest, and slept like a top. I was up betimes next morning, quite restored, and, having breakfasted, started on pony-back. After a mile or two I got off and walked the rest of the way, finding I could outpace my steed. The road was lovely in the extreme, and must have appeared more so to me, than even in reality, after the monotony of the frying-pan of Bengal. It winded round hill that rose above hill, all densely wooded, by the side of khuds or declivities, with peeps into deep nullahs or valleys,

patched with cultivation, and each divided by its stream. For a short distance of the first part of the way, at bends of the road, came views over the wide-stretching plains below; then the hills gradually closed in behind, and shut them out from my unreluctant sight. Unexpectedly at last, a turn in the road revealed Naini Tal, expanding all its charms to my view. Outspread below reposed the Tal, a tarn rather than a lake, oval and olive green, closed in at one end by the broad flanks of two great heights, Dio Pattar and Cheena, whose rocky splintered crest and single peak soaring into the sky are mirrored on the Tal's unruffled breast. On either side, mountain slopes rise up almost sheer from its margin, clothed to their brows with luxuriant vivid green vegetation that lends its colour to the mere. Dotted all over the hillsides, from base to summit, peep out from amid their foliage the rust-red roofs of little bungalows, each perched on its own level plot of made ground. At the further end a gap, down which, in its rocky bed, a stream trickles from the lake, discloses in

vista the golden glimmer of the far-distant Indian plain.

Besides these natural advantages, in which few of the other sanatoria can vie with it, Naini Tal has all those little social attractions, possessed in common with the rest, from which, for the most part, greater satisfaction is derived than from the scenery. Upon the shore, at the head of the lake, are assembly and reading-rooms (the latter well stocked with Ouida and Miss Broughton), where balls and réunions are held, and where, in the afternoons, people congregate to gossip and retail the tattle of the station,—as says Sir Peter, “a character dead at every word.” Behind is a limited space of stony ground dedicated to polo, cricket, and lawn tennis, where a regimental band performs once a week. Upon the lake are occasional mild exhibitions of aquatics, in which not the least prowess is displayed by Amazonian wielders of the oar. In the afternoon the crowded Mall, a broad tree-shaded roadway by the edge of the lake, presents an animated scene. Eques-

trians and equestriennes dash past on frenzied screws. Carriages there are none, for the amount of flat is too restricted, but less vigorously constituted ladies are carried past in dandies and jam-pans, a horizontal sedan chair or lidless coffin, in which to half recline, and borne by coolies, called jampanis or jampan wallahs—from four to six or even eight to each. In fact, the status of a mem sab is indicated by the size of her retinue of jampanis. These are short hill men (paharis), generally mere boys, with bare black heads, a handkerchief tied round them perhaps, and naked calves and feet; but in the matter of their liveries (tunics and trousers to the knee), their fair mistresses give full scope to their chromatic caprices, arraying them as symphonies and fantasias of all the hues of the rainbow. Nor, it must be admitted, is it an un-picturesque sight to see these Anglo-Indian beauties languidly borne along, and the play of colour as the various jampanis meet and pass each other. Accompanying each, is usually a group of cavaliers on foot, with long sticks in their hands,

hobbling painfully with unequal steps to keep up with the malicious jampanis, who jog trottingly along. With badmintons, picnics, and excursions to the various points in the neighbourhood, these are the typical diversions of an Indian hill station, not very enthralling, and not very ambitious to be sure, but by no means without a quiet gratification of their own.

At the hills it is that that most notable of the social institutions of Anglo-India, the great Bow-wow system, to which all the amusements just described are made to minister, attains perfection ; and "at the hills," accordingly, an account of it is most fittingly introduced. True, it exists also in the plains, but there it languishes, while it flourishes here. Usually, when married people are together, it is in the plains, but the hills often put them asunder. While the mountain breezes are reviving the faded roses on the pallid cheek of the Sahiba, her faithful spouse is grilling and bread-winning down below. The presence of the "hubbie," as he is more familiarly than endearingly designated, is

not by any means necessarily fatal to bow wowing but, on the other hand, his room may be said to favour it more than his company. Often he is a bow wow himself, and then they study reciprocity, though, such is the onesided selfishness of man, that not infrequently the most cicisbean husbands are the most vigilant Cerberi of their wives. The social philosopher is always most profitably employed, not in apportioning censure, as Dominie Sampson distributed his soup, but in accounting for the existence of things; and if he directs his inquiries to the reason why this peculiar institution particularly prevails in India, he will discover that it is established upon a sound economic basis, and is a result of the well ascertained law, that the value of a commodity is in large measure dependent upon its rarity. In England, one is always hearing of the redundancy of women, but in India it is the rougher sex that is redundant, while the gentler forms a small minority. In India, therefore, the latter are appreciated, and appreciate themselves accordingly. Thus

many a fair one who at home would waste her sweetness on the desert air, has in India as many strings to her bow as would equip a bodyguard of archers, and suitors plentiful as Penelope. 'Unfortunately, as in the case of most others, this explanation can be regarded as only partial. To your veteran bowwow there is nothing in the world so distasteful as a "spin," and he deigns to follow only at a matron's heels. However preponderating, therefore, men might be, if there were only spinsters, and no married ladies, bowwowism could never attain its full development. Another peculiarity somewhat analogous, and just the contrary of what one would *a priori* have anticipated,—for the subject is full of inexplicable perplexities,—and seeming to indicate an obscure affinity between the matrimonial state and the phenomenon under discussion, is that the inveterate bowwow is rarely a gay young bachelor, and much more commonly a heavy father with a large wife and a larger progeny. Of bowwows there is every variety of species. There is the big-jowled hound,

who trots inoffensively and contentedly at heel; then there is the perky, snappish little puppy, that snarls and shows its teeth at every one; besides poodles, lapdogs, pugs, and mongrels of all kinds, till every variety of the canine genus is exhausted. Altogether, perhaps the most serviceable sort is the official bowwow, answering, to the name of "Burrah Sab." Of him, his fair owner takes firm hold, while she extends the other hand to hubbie, then, with an encouraging "Off you go, good dog," away they all start, and, in a short time, gain the top of the difficult ascent called "Promotion."

Ladies differ very much in their predilections with regard to the breed of their bowwows,—some liking one kind, some preferring another; but sooner than possess none at all, they will accept the attentions of the humblest sort. Some, again, will have only one bowwow at a time, while others pride themselves on being the owners of a pack. One thing, however, can by no chance occur, for a bowwow to have more than one proprietress at the same time and place. Were that

— avaunt the dreadful thought! — to come to pass,

* “bella, horrida bella,

Et Tybrim multo spumantem sanguine cerno.”

Those ladies, it must be allowed, who have a kennel full, have a much more difficult task than those less ambitious, who are satisfied with the allegiance of a single canine follower, and it demands of the former the exercise of the strongest will, and the most delicate finesse to maintain order among their unruly subjects. If one dog be taken out oftener than another, or other marks of favour be not equally distributed all round, into their little breasts the green-eyed Monster is sure to find his way, and then they bark and bite according to the nature with which it has pleased Dr. Watts to endow them. To restore harmony, their fair proprietress must resort to a variety of treatment, according to the particular temperament of each animal. One she will have to coax into good behaviour, another starve into submission, to a third she must apply the dog-whip vigorously, and threaten a fourth with expulsion from the

kennel. Some owners delight in stirring up strife in their packs, some under the idea that jealousy ensures fidelity, others out of pure *cussedness*, as an American would say. At all other times, however, and for the best part, bowwows are the mildest and most inoffensive of creatures, content to fetch and carry, well satisfied with a pat upon the head, and a "Give me your paw, there's a good Pompey!" Their bark is worse than their bite, and even in giving, like Bottom when he roared, they aggravate their voices, and bay as gently as any sucking dove. It must not be supposed for a single instant that there is anything, for one moment, improper in all of this. There never is the least occasion to say, "Cave canem." It is the most platonic philandering in the world, and a piece of most admirable fooling. Often must Caudle lectures be interrupted to have a laugh at the absurd gambols of poor bowwow, and the way in which he has been fooled to the top of his bent.

Chief of all the sights of a Himalayan hill

station are of course the snows, to behold which at Naini Tal daily pilgrimages are made to a place called "the snow seat," supposed to be the best point of view. Not that these mountain monarchs condescend at all times to make themselves visible. For days together they remain shrouded behind curtains of clouds. I remember I made several fruitless journeys before my toil was rewarded. At last, as I was walking along the hill-top path one morning, my companion exclaimed, "There are the snows!" I looked up to what I supposed would be the greatest height of any mountains in existence, but could see nothing. "Look," repeated he, "cannot you see them; they are quite distinct?" By degrees I raised my eyes higher and higher, till I seemed to be scanning the very centre of the sky; and there, floating in mid heaven, as it were, beheld cloudlets of silver,—these then were the topmost peaks of those mighty mountains, piercing through their fleecy canopy of cloud. As I continued to gaze they took shape and consistency, and one could perceive that they

must be mountain summits after all, for they appeared too hard and white to be nebulous. Gradually they divested themselves of more and more of their clothing of cloud, till finally they stood before us in all their sublime nakedness, from summit to base. A snowy barrier of stupendous slopes with fretted crest of peaks, pyramids, pinnacles, and domes, shutting out heaven and earth across one entire horizon. That vast rounded mountain, nigh 26,000 feet in height, is Nundi Devi—the bull of Siva, his vehan or chariot. That cluster in the centre, of three points, each upwards of 20,000 feet, is called Trisool, the trident of Mahadeva, a symbol that glitters on the apex of every Shivala upon the plains of Hindostan—for these are the summits of Kailas, the “crystal” habitations of the greater gods of a mightier Olympus. As I continued to look, I felt what others have told me they have experienced in the same presence, how unearthly pure they are, how coldly calm, and how loftily unattainable, till the heart seemed to sicken with a fruitless longing.

Not so sublimely grand, but more humanly beautiful, is the Almorah Road, which I have heard pronounced, by one who had seen most of India, the loveliest in it; and, for my part, I have beheld none more beautiful, either in India or in other lands. Half-way up the mountain slopes it winds in and out along their rounded flanks, dense with lush growth of tree and fern, and cool with trickling rills; above, far overhead, tower the grassy brows of Lyria Kanta; below, ravine beyond ravine, deep and shaggy, descends lengthwise to the broad lands of Oude and Rohilcund. Here often in the morning I used to come, and leaning over the wooden rails by the barracks, look down the verdant perspective of the Raneebagh mullah. The sun had not yet gained much power, nor the all-obscuring golden haze arisen out of the plains which, far and wide as eye could reach, lay stretched beneath like a vast and melancholy Main chequered with a thousand isles.

During my stay at Naini Tal, together with a member of the Calcutta bar, an agreeable com-

panion of a reflective mind, and with an eye for nature, I made a ten days' walking tour towards "the snows," through those hills and woods and waters that make Kumaon the fairest portion of all the Sub-Himalayan region—one of the most beautiful territories on earth. Alone in all that great extent it possesses lake scenery, a chain of gem-like tarns stretching some fifteen to twenty miles from Naini Tal. Of these the nearest is Bheem Tal, an exquisite lakelet with an isle, and upon it a ruined temple—a favourite excursion from Naini Tal. A little further on, and more beautiful still, perhaps the loveliest of them all, is another, which, looking down upon it from a height, I saw chalcid in the hollow of a group of hill-tops whose spurs run out into its waters indenting them, whence its name Naukutchia, or Lake of Nine Nesses. Apart, deep down at the bottom of a well of precipitous mountain-sides, lie the sunless waters of Mulwa Tal.

As we progressed on our way to Almorah the snows grew nearer and more vast. The Kumaoni

Capital is a picturesque little town, lying like a Highland clachan at the top of a wild glen. It is said to have the prettiest and cleanest bazaar in India—smoothly causewayed, the shops with fronts of carved wood, and at one end a white temple; while in the gardens of the English residents, as we passed, home flowers, such as roses and dahlias, were blooming.

The furthest point we reached was a hill called Binsur Peak, a tree-clad isolated cone, with a native bungalow near the top, and empty, which we obtained permission to occupy. Here we were so enchanted with the prospects and the delightful remoteness of our situation, that we resolved to spend a day or two in our mountain home. At a little distance from the bungalow, and at a point still higher, was a cairn of stones erected by the Trigonometrical Survey. Early in the morning, before the sun had arisen, we used to sally out, and walking through the pinewoods take our station upon it with field glasses in our hands. Over the tops of dark hills that rolled below us up to the base

of the snows, their deep valleys filled with fleecy vapours, rose, in close proximity now, the vast flanks and towering summits of the giant chain. As when one has entered some great opera-house before it is lit up all is gloom, till, the flamelet travelling from jet to jet, there blazes forth a circle of light, so these lay dull and leaden, till, far away at the eastern extreme, Morning with her torch of dawn touched first one slumbering peak and then another and another, and all the enkindled line coruscated with silvery sheen.

Evening, as the sun was sinking, found us again at our vigil on the cairn. If possible the view then was even more lovely than by sunrise. The warm tints of sunset suffused the snows with a hectic flush, which, gradually as the sun declined, faded from off them, till they grew pale and cold like marble masks, and the stars came out one by one flickering like tapers on the faces of the dead.

Alas! that delicious *dolce far niente* on a lonely mountain-top could not be for ever. The spirit of unrest dragged us downward again, and forced

us to resume our wandering. Hence we struck across to the large station of Ranikhet, and, from the neighbouring but greater eminence of Chubuttia, obtained another panorama of the snows little, if any, short of as imposing as from the Peak of Binsur.

On our return to Naini Tal we found that in the short interval the cold weather had set in, and its visitors, swallows of the summer, migrated, leaving the hotels vacant and the Mall forsaken. As there was something depressing in the desertion of a place that till recently had been so full of gaiety and life, and as, moreover, I had determined to see some of the most famous of Indian cities before I returned to Calcutta, I prepared, though regretfully, to follow in their plainward steps.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CITIES OF THE MUTINY—DELHI.

DELHI, Cawnpore, Lucknow, whose names are household words, I have associated together, not only because I saw them immediately in succession, but because they are united by a common tie, which, for Englishmen and Englishwomen, at least of this and the next succeeding generations, must constitute their greatest interest, namely that they are the theatres in which were enacted the chief scenes of the tragic drama of 1857.

Although, since the beginning of the Christian era, there have been half-a-dozen distinct Delhis, the remains of whose forts, palaces, mosques, and tombs strew an area of forty-five miles surrounding the present city, yet the existing Delhi dates only from the middle of the seventeenth century, when it was founded by the monarch in honour of whom

it bears also the name of Shahjehanabad. Indeed no inconsiderable portion of it is more recent still, for since the Mutiny rookeries of old houses have been swept away, public buildings of European architecture erected, new roads, planted with trees, been constructed, and parks and gardens laid out. At the same time it retains all its native picturesqueness and Indian character. Its chief street, the Chandnee Chouk, or Silver Street, a long and broad thoroughfare, differs from most others in having a wide, raised shaded footpath running down its centre, while the road for vehicles is on either side. Here are situated the shops for the sale of the various manufactures for which Delhi is famous—filigree jewellery, paintings on ivory, shawls, and other fabrics,—mean-looking hovels many of them, but containing a stock-in-trade only to be estimated in lakhs. A narrower, but very quaint and antique looking street is the Dureeba, where are congregated the shops of scent sellers, exhibiting dumpy earthenware jars that emit the cloying odours of attar of roses and other perfumes. All who have

visited the Delhi of to-day will allow that it is the brightest, cleanest, and most attractive of all Indian cities, and with its boulevards and public gardens, its native streets and Eastern architecture, a curious and anything but a displeasing medley of the oriental and the Euro-continental. •

The chief glories of the capital of the great Moguls are undoubtedly the Jumma Musjid and the Marble Palace, both built by the founder of the city. Go where you will in and about Delhi and the country round, the one object that meets your eye everywhere, far or near, is the Jumma Musjid, with its white domes topped with golden crescents, and flanked by twin minars, tall and needle like. Of all the mosques throughout India this is the most magnificent; and like all other head mosques, is named "Jumma," or Friday, which is the Mahomedan Sabbath. A vast square of lofty arcaded walls, the four corners topped each by a domed cupola, it crowns a natural elevation within the city, central gateways, arched and stupendous, crested with dwarf minarets and domelets like bee-

hives, and approached by long flights of steps, giving admission to the interior. Within is a quadrangle whose spaciousness recalls the old court of Trinity, Cambridge, paved with red sandstone flags, and having a marble tank in its midst for the preliminary ablutions of the faithful. Fronting the mosque, one realises its full beauty. The façade consists of a lofty fretted arch, set in an arabesque frame, with a colonnade on either side, flanked by two minars, 130 feet in height, formed of red sandstone and white marble, in alternate longitudinal bands, each surmounted by a marble kiosk. Upon the flat roof of the superstructure repose three pear-shaped domes of whitest marble, a larger central and two lesser ones, tipped with gilded glittering spear points; the whole producing an effect unspeakably airy and oriental. The interior is paved throughout with oblong slabs of white marble, bordered with black, and having the appearance of recumbent tombstones. Of these there are nine hundred, with space on each for two worshippers to kneel. An embellished marble

niche in the middle of the inmost wall of the mosque is the Kibla, and tells the faithful the direction of sacred Mecca. Like most other edifices of a religious character, this possesses its venerable and venerated relics, as genuine, no doubt, as such things commonly are. A Mullah shows a small marble slab from Medina with the print of the Prophet's foot *Kadam Rasul*, also a slipper of the Prophet, and then, slowly unwinding the silken wrappers in which a glass case is swaddled, reveals a single wiry-looking red hair, which, with bated breath, he declares to be from the beard of the founder of Islam.

Close by, within the walks of that part of the citadel immediately overlooking the Jumna river and its arid sandy tracts, cluster together the various buildings of the Marble Palace—the architectural glory of modern Delhi. It is impossible to convey any idea of their grace, their richness, or their luxury. Rather than specimens of sober architecture, they are gemmed and jewelled caskets, master-pieces of the goldsmith's and the lapidary's arts. One

portion contains the imperial apartments, marble chambers inlaid with precious stones, representing birds and fruits and flowers—more sumptuous by far than the Trianons of Marie Antoinette. Within an adjoining enclosure, all of marble, are the imperial baths, two large tanks,—one for the Emperor, and the other for the ladies of the Zenana, but without the formality of any partition to divide them. Close by is the private chapel of the palace, as it were—the Motee Musjid, or Pearl Mosque, well named from its pearly loveliness, where the imperial voluptuary, having cleansed himself corporeally, might seek to wash away his spiritual impurities. Meet to be Diana's temple is this fane, so chaste its minarets and miniature domes of spotless snowy marble. Historically most interesting, however, is the Dewan Khass, or Hall of Private Audience, an open pavilion of those exquisite multifoil Saracenic arches resting on massive shafts elaborately chased with foliage in relief. The whole is of marble, dazzling white, save where within it is profusely gilded and decorated with floral mosaics. Here it was that stood

the Peacock Throne, so called because of its supporters, two of Juno's birds with outspread tails ablaze with diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, amethysts, and rubies (pre-eminent among them the famous Mountain of Light), and computed to have been of the value of £6,000,000 sterling. It was carried off by the Persian conqueror Nadir Shah, when he captured and sacked Delhi, and now all that remains to tell the tale of quondam splendour is its plain white marble base. The ceiling too was of silver filigree, which escaped the cupidity of the Persian only to fall a victim to the rapacity of the Mahrattas, who looted it and put it into the melting-pot, where it realised £170,000 worth of bullion. This building it is upon whose walls, in letters of gold, is inscribed the celebrated vaunt, "If there be a Paradise upon Earth it is this, it is this." Like its prototype, however, the marble halls of Mogul magnificence are tenantless and forsaken, and "*Vanitas vanitatum*" would seem a more appropriate legend for the deserted palaces of the imperial house of Timour. At first a feeling of sadness, that cannot be repressed,

arises in contemplating these memorials of fallen greatness, but by-and-by the thought presents itself that perhaps, after all, it is just as well that such fools' paradises should have but their hour.

In another part of the city, one meets with the first visible traces of the days of the Mutiny—relics of a character very dissimilar to the last, and calling up feelings widely different. A great writer has observed that the man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plains of Marathon, and climbing the crumbled walls, and standing upon the top of the Cashmere Gate, with masses of demolished masonry and the deep indentations of cannon-shot, to call up the stirring episodes of that eventful 14th of September, I am not ashamed to confess that a warmer admiration and a livelier patriotism were kindled within me on finding myself in the presence of the scene of the heroic devotion of a Salkeld and a Home. Outside, in the wall of that gate, where one perished and which both destroyed, a tablet records the approbation of a

great commander, able to appreciate, because himself capable of such valour—Lord Napier of Magdala. In the cemetery hard by, an unpretending tombstone marks the grave of Nicholson, who, as it states, “led the assault of Delhi, but fell in the hour of victory mortally wounded.” Within gun-fire of these spots is “the Ridge,” the cannon mounted on which played upon the beleaguered city. From this long low crest of rocky hill magnificent views are obtained over Delhi, its glistening minarets and domes, rising from out the midst of the green foliage of trees inside its red-walled battlements, with the mazy Jumna meandering through the level and champaign. Here are the ruins of “The Observatory,” “The Flagstaff Tower,” and “Hindoo Rao’s House”—marked by shot and shell fired by the mutineers from within the city—names each full of history to those familiar with the narrative of the siege; while an octagonal tower, with long columns of killed on its sides, and terminating in a white marble cross, within a circle is “The Memorial,” erected by their com-

rades and Government, to the slain of the Delhi Field Force. Descending from these records of strife and bloodshed, while the soft tints of the after-glow still suffused the sky, I was not indisposed to seek diversion from these sombre associations, amid the more tranquil scenes of the Roshunara gardens—gardens as beautiful as their name, that of a daughter of Shah Jehan—with green turf umbrageous trees shady walks and a lake, carpeted with the Singhara nut, the whole reminding me of Hampton Court of a Sunday evening in June. In their centre, a white chunam pavilion contains the sepulchre of the princess. Another tomb within the grounds, that of a favourite servant of the Begum, is a natural curiosity in its way, a large mango tree springing from the centre of the grave, just as in some old law books the genealogical tree is figured sprouting out of the stomach of the *propositus*.

The one remaining sight, which nobody who goes to Delhi omits to visit, is the Kootub Minar. It is about ten miles distant, and the

road to it lies through literally a necropolis of Pathan tombs, short, square keeps, with domed tops, grim and sombre looking. On the way, one turns aside to notice the splendid mausoleum of Sufter Jung, "Penetrator of the Ranks of War," one of the Nawabs of Oude. A smaller Taj, it stands in a large flower garden, in the walls of which are charming little pavilions or rest-houses. Upon the white plaster of the one I entered, I read the names in pencil of about a dozen persons, male and female, who had picniced there in the terrible year '57. Opposite the first, in another hand, were written the words, "afterwards murdered in Delhi," a tragic "ditto" chronicling the similar fate of the rest of that merry gathering.

The Kootub is a columnar pillar of red sandstone masonry, 238 feet in height, with a diameter of 48 feet at the base, and 9 feet at the summit, and consists of a series of five diminishing storeys, one upon the top of the other, in joints like a spyglass. Indeed the Minar bears much resemblance to a huge telescope drawn out and

placed upright on its larger end. This similitude is by no means intended to detract from its impressiveness, for the Kootub is one of the grandest and most striking monuments of architecture upon the surface of the globe. From end to end, and over its entire circumference, it is most beautifully and diversely fluted, and covered with elaborate sculptured ornamentation, whose minuteness is in wonderful contrast with the vast bulk of the monument. Its site also contributes to the effect, rising as it does out of the centre of smooth sward, a garden of trees and flowers, and surrounded by broken arches and rows of pillars, like the ruined cloisters of a great cathedral. Legend ascribes its foundation to Rao Pithora's daughter, who desired that from the top she might daily behold the sun rise over the blue waters of the Jumna. Fact declares that it is a *Mazineh* to summon the faithful to prayers, and was erected to celebrate the overthrow, in A.D. 1193, of the last of the Hindoo Rajahs of Delhi—the same Rao Pithora—by Kootub-

oodeen, the Turki slave, who rose to be the first Emperor of Delhi.

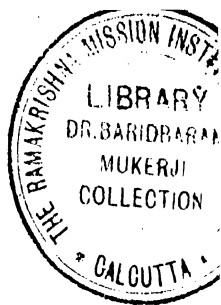
Close to the Minar is another monument more curious than beautiful, "the iron lat, or pillar," a cylindrical shaft, smooth and black with age, and tapering slightly upwards to a mace-like head. The column is solid, and in one piece, measuring 16 inches in diameter, and, as excavations have shown, about 60 feet in length, of which 22 are above ground, the whole weighing 17 tons. As archæologists date its existence as far back as A.D. 319, it must be regarded even more noteworthy as a marvel of mechanical skill, than as a monument of antiquity. The legend attached to it, for of course there is one, is that Rao Pithora, or as he is also called, Prithvi Rajah, on the advice of the Brahmins, to avert the apprehended fall of his dynasty, sunk the pillar into the earth, in order at once to found it and his house upon the head of the snake-god, Lishay—the supporter of the Universe. To test the success of his experiment, a violation of the urgent

entreaties of his spiritual advisers, he had it taken up, when to his consternation the butt was found covered with blood. It was precipitately replaced, but the Brahmins predicted the speedy extinction of his line, which soon afterwards, in the manner I have already stated, passed for ever away.

At the royal tombs of Mehrowlie close by, thronged with fakeers, dervishes, and other religious mendicants, I for the first time witnessed *well-diving*—a favourite pastime and exhibition in this part of India. Standing on the cope of a wall, or with a run from a dome top, the well-diver will jump a hundred feet and more down into a small bathing tank. They go feet first, and just as they take the spring, throw up their arms, and gather their legs under them, moving the former about overhead to steady themselves in the descent, then the instant before they touch the surface the legs are sharply straightened close together, the arms are brought down stiff to the side, and they enter the water like an arrow with the sound of a dead man's dive. In a second they are up again, and

reaching the steps hand over hand, are ready to repeat the performance indefinitely for a few annas the leap.

The old vaulted gatehouses of the courtyard of the Kootub have been turned into the most cool and delightful bungalows, and in one of them, amid these ruins, relics, and remains of a remote antiquity, and under the long shade of the great Minar, I went that night to rest.



CHAPTER VII.

CAWNPORE.

IT was about midnight when I arrived at the Cawnpore station of the East India Railway. A tedious drive in a gharry along straight, dusty roads, with shadowy trees, through glooming flats, brought me to the dak bungalow—a tumble-down, dilapidated sort of tenement. Whether owing to the tragic associations of the region, or to something—perhaps the dead monotony—in the aspect of the landscape, I cannot tell, but a vague sense of horror oppressed me from the moment I entered the locality. In consequence, I slept restlessly all night, dreaming of Nana Sahib, and imagining myself an actor in the incidents of those fearful times.

I was up and dressed before six, and wishing to see, in the quiet of early morning, the spot round

which the chief interest of Cawnpore concentrates, drove through a wilderness of dusty mean streets to the gardens, containing the Well and the Memorial. They are large and park-like, shaded by thickly planted trees, and enclosed like a cemetery by a black iron railing, with little lodges at the gates. As I entered, flower-beds attracted my eye, laid out in English style, budding and blooming with pale, lovely roses. In the centre a circular mound of turf, to which straight avenues converge, slopes gradually up, on the top of which is placed the Memorial, encircled by tall cypresses, and belts of yew, but at a sufficient distance to leave the Monument perfectly disclosed.

It consists of a peculiarly light and graceful screen of freestone, octagonal in shape, and Gothic in design, with fenestral arches, filled in with tracery, and having pinnacles over the angles around the top. Entrance within the screen is through an ogive doorway, bearing over it, upon a scroll, the inscription, "These are they which came out of great tribulation," and closed by a

black iron gate, cruciform at the top, with the letters "I. H. S." in a circle. Although the bitter heart-burnings and the keen animosities that were once so fresh have happily subsided by the lapse of time, and the favoured policy is to let bygones be bygones, I confess that it did somewhat grate upon me to find the guardianship of a spot so sacred to us confided to a native attendant, and for once I felt that a dark face was out of keeping. Within, a few steps lead down to a sunk paved floor running round the interior, in the centre of which is the mouth of the well, closed by a great stone in the form of an ornamented capital of a column, upon which stands the marble effigy of a white-winged messenger of peace, leaning, with drooping pinions, her back against the all-sustaining cross, her arms folded upon her breast, palm branches in her hands, and with down-turned, sideward bent head regarding the well beneath. Truth to say, the face is expressionless and stony, but in such a scene criticism is disarmed, and sympathy supplies to the features a look of ineffable compassion and

love. Round the capital are inscribed these touching words :—" Sacred to the perpetual memory of a great company of Christian people, chiefly women and children, who near this spot were cruelly massacred by the followers of the rebel Nana Dhoondopunt of Bithoor, and cast, the dying with the dead, into the well below, on the 15th day of July 1857."

While I was there, the sun had begun to beat fiercely down, but the whole time I stayed with head bared ; no Englishman, I imagine, ever yet stood covered in that presence. As I gazed I could not help thinking for an instant with a shudder, all peacefully as the poor remains are now resting beneath the dull cold marble, of the sight of the well, choked with tangled limbs, bruised and torn, that nearly twenty years before had greeted the eyes of the countrymen of the victims, and maddened them to orgies of vengeance. The Memorial has been cavilled at, as being altogether too slight and insignificant to commemorate an event at once so tragic and so historical ; and it has been invidiously contrasted

with the colossal mausolea that elsewhere throughout the country have been erected by oriental egotism to perpetuate self. A purer taste would, I think, suggest that in the simplicity and unpretentiousness of the Memorial lies its chief, if not its only beauty; and that it is much more in unison with Christian art and Christian sentiment, than if Humayoon's tomb and the sepulchre of Sufter Jung had been transported thither, and, like Pelion upon Ossa, piled one upon the top of the other.

From the spot where the Cawnpore tragedy culminated, I directed my steps to earlier scenes in the same drama—places whose very mention, how much more than themselves—"cite up a thousand fearful times." Of "*Wheeler's Entrenchment*"—the slender rampart of earth, behind which the British residents of the station, when the flame of mutiny and murder burst out, congregated for shelter; where for three protracted weeks, under the blazing sky of Indian midsummer, amid privations and miseries incomprehensible, the

little band held the surging rebel hordes at bay—verily there have lived brave men since Agamemnon—and which, invincible in fair fight against overwhelming odds, only yielded to perfidy without a parallel in the annals of infamy, scarce a trace remains. Within its lines now stands the Memorial Church, an imposing edifice of red brick, with a tall tower, seen on the level landscape from afar. Inside, upon its windowless walls, innumerable marble tablets tell the names of those who died or were slain, the texts upon many, taken from the Psalms of David, and calling upon the God of the Christian not to turn His face in the hour of their need from His people in a strange land, enabled me more completely to realise the intensity of feeling of those dreadful days than any other vestige of the Indian Mutiny. Beside the new barracks, near at hand, a large monumental cross of stone has been erected, whose epitaph tells its own story. “In a well under this cross were laid, by the hands of their fellows in suffering, the bodies of men, women, and

children who died hard by, during the heroic defence of Wheeler's Entrenchment, when beleagured by the rebel Nana." This well was the burying ground of that forlorn camp, where, at the end of each day, those who had fallen in fight, or sunk in sickness, were laid to rest by the loving hands of their comrades.

Decoyed from the frail protection of their earth-works by the Nana's promise of a safe conduct, and placing a vain reliance in the Punic faith of a proved traitor, to which confidence their wretchedness well nigh insupportable could alone have induced them, the surviving remnant, wasted and worn with want, sickness, and hope deferred, toiled in the sun, through burnt-up fields, by a deep gully or creek to the edge of the river, where were the boats waiting, as they fondly believed, to transport them in safety to Allahabad. This place, once named "Suttee Chowra Ghat," is now significantly called "Slaughter Ghat." It forms rather a pretty example of the bathing or praying ghats that abound along the margins

of the great Indian rivers. On the top of the bank stands a quaint little Hindoo temple, of grey weather-stained stone, overshadowed by the outspreading branches of two very fine peepul trees, while close below steps of stone lead down into the water. As I saw it, the Ganges was flowing wide and smooth in the rich yellow light, and upon the steps men and women were bathing, washing clothes, or drawing water,—as placid and peaceful a scene as could well be conceived. No sooner, however, had the foredoomed captives embarked, than, at a preconcerted signal, the boatmen set fire to the thatched awnings of the boats, they jumped ashore, the crafts stranded, while from ambuscades volleys of musketry and grape opened on those on board. Some were shot, some were burned, some were drowned, some cut down or bayoneted in the water. The chief part were dragged ashore again, where most of the men were butchered on the bank, while the unhappy women and children were marched back to Cawnpore, to endure a more lingering agony and an

unkinder fate. But of all the company of people that left the entrenchment that morning, four only escaped alive.

Of "*the Beebeeghur*," where these hapless ones were eventually confined, where they were forced to grind at the mill by their dusky taskmasters, and where finally they were foully done to death, not one stone has been left standing on another, nor aught exists to indicate where once it was. Its site is said to be within the enclosure of the Memorial Gardens. The Nemesis of a Havelock and a Neill was now at length rapidly approaching—too late to save. A few hours before the arrival of the victorious Havelock, that fiend incarnate, the rebel Nana, either out of the sheer wantonness of devilish malignity, or because the dead tell no tales, issued orders for the final massacre. The sepoys to whom the command was given, indignantly rebelled against the vile mandate. The good offices of the butchers of the bazaar were then invoked, and these, who were encumbered by no delicate compunctions,

when volley after volley had been poured upon the defenceless inmates, went knife in hand in amongst the densely packed mass of women and children, and slaughtered them like sheep in the shambles. Havelock appeared, but the floor was ankle-deep in blood, strewn with torn tresses of brown and gold, and the well was choked. Neill too arrived, and the retributive justice that he exacted history not disapprovingly narrates.

In addition to these scenes of most melancholy interest, Cawnpore possesses nothing to engage the attention of the general traveller. After I had visited them all, and the task is soon over, there was little for me but to stay within the dreary walls of the bungalow waiting for the evening train to bear me to Lucknow. All the time I remained in Cawnpore, I was unable to disabuse myself of the feeling I had experienced on first entering it—that the place was accursed, and that a blight rested upon it. Fancy no doubt, for it is one of the most thriving and well-to-do towns in the country, and its Baniahs

among the richest in the land. But nowhere, not upon the Cashmere Gate at Delhi, nor among the ruins of the Residency at Lucknow, is the Indian Mutiny in all its darkness and all its anguish so vividly brought home as at Cawnpore. Therefore, when the time came, it was with a sense of relief that I shook its dust from off my feet, and turned my back upon it—a city that, had stern justice been meted out to it according to its deserts, would have been razed to the ground, its site turned up by the ploughshare, and the furrows sown with salt.

CHAPTER VIII.

LUCKNOW.

AFTER a late dinner at the hotel in which I put up at Lucknow, I turned out to take a stroll before going to bed. The night was glorious in the extreme, the air cool, the sky studded with innumerable stars, and the moon, near its full, shone overhead, making all things visible. Leaving my direction to chance, I sauntered along a fine straight road ; at first, on either side, were elegant-looking shops and dwelling-houses, and it might have passed for a street in one of the more modern parts of Paris. Then on one hand, looming a little back, stood out the domes and towers of greater buildings, while on the other were railed-in parks with trees. The road appeared of interminable length and straightness, but the beauty of the night lured me on step after step,

and curiosity to find where this undeviating thoroughfare might lead. At last I came to a broken archway, which I entered, and ascending a gradual rise, with fallen buildings on either side, found myself at the top of an eminence, crowned with extensive ruins, lying amid gardens, with turf and walks and beds aglow with flowers and surrounded by well wooded grounds. From ruin to ruin I wandered about. Standing in a large roofless hall, with big round holes in its walls, its glassless windows festooned with bright trailing creepers and lines of ivy, through which the straggling moonbeams fell upon the floor, it began to dawn upon me that surely I had come upon—"The Residency." Then my eyes fell on a marble slab let into one of the walls, and I read, "The Banqueting Hall, used as a General Hospital." How different the feasts these stones have looked upon! Another inscription, in a different building, has these words, "In this room Sir H. Lawrence was wounded by a piece of shell on the 2d July 1857." The hole through

which the shell from that fateful howitzer entered is still to be seen. In an adjoining place, a mural tablet tells, "Here Sir Henry Lawrence died, 4th July 1857." Close by on a mound is a tall florid cross, with a medallion profile of Sir Henry Lawrence—a monument erected by Lord Lawrence to the memory of his brother. Dotted here and there at different points among the trees of the undulating park-like domain, I came upon dwarf pyramids of brick, with well-known names on little marble tablets, marking the scenes of many a glorious encounter against overwhelming numbers. Here was "Gubbin's Battery," there the "Redan Battery," and at a third point, most perilous of all, were trained the guns of the "Cawnpore Battery." Ascending to the top of a tall slender tower, sadly smashed and battered, which was "the look-out" during the investment, I had a splendid bird's-eye prospect over the city on the Goomtee with its palaces and mosques gleaming in the moonlight, while the ruins of

the Residency lay below, and close beside them a cemetery. On proceeding within, I found the graveyard crowded with the tombstones of those who fell or sickened to death during those grievous times, each with its touching legend. Many of the monuments contained a host of names of officers and soldiers, and were the tributes of surviving comrades.

The resting-place of Neill is here, who has always struck me as being the most resolute and intrepid leader evoked by the Indian Mutiny. Also that of Sir Henry Lawrence, with the epitaph written by himself, "Here lies Sir Henry Lawrence, who tried to do his duty. May the Lord have mercy upon his soul." The archway then by which I entered had been the famous "Baillie Guard," the gate-lodge of the Residency, and one of the most hotly contested posts during the siege, as, on making my exit through it, I could tell from the traces of the withering fire which it had sustained. On the plaster of some adjacent walls were inscribed the names

of a large number of private soldiers, the hands of many of whom, poor fellows, soon grew cold and stiff.

A portion of next day I devoted to the remaining sights of the mutiny at Lucknow, which are more notable for their associations than anything in themselves. An insignificant arch, formerly called "Sher Darwaza," or Tiger Gate, from some figures of stone upon it, is ever memorable as the place where the gallant Neill, in his advance to the first relief, met with his death-blow from a round shot, the last fired in the day's engagement. It is now surmounted by a white marble statue of the hero, and is known as "Neill Darwaza." In the environs, amongst the fields, is a pretty country house, called Dil Kusha, fast going, when I saw it, to wreck and ruin. In one of its rooms Havelock, worn out by anxiety and dysentery, breathed his last. In the garden attached to it, I remarked beautiful flowers such as often bloom loveliest on the saddest spots. At Alam Bagh, another of the suburban resorts of former potentates of Oude, and associated also with the

names of Colin Campbell and Outram, Havelock lies buried. A place of grimmer memory is Secunder Bagh, once the high-walled pleasure garden of a sultana of the palace. During the Mutiny it was loopholed, and held by two thousand Pandies, but in the advance of Sir Colin Campbell the walls were breached, and the 93d Highlanders entering bayoneted the mutineers to a man.

Turning from the memorials of the Mutiny, I shall briefly glance at the architectural monuments of Lucknow, or such as have been retained in my memory. They none of them merit more than the most cursory notice. I had heard of the glories of Lucknow, and how they eclipsed those of any other Indian city—of its magnificent mosques and splendid palaces. Seen by the flattering and delusive moonlight, the eulogy may to some extent be justified—the outlines of the vast buildings—enormity is their chief feature—being imposing and sometimes even noble, but the garish light of day lays bare their deficiencies,

and exposes the chaps and wrinkles in the Rachel-like enamel. It is exactly as in a display of fireworks at Cremorne or other public gardens, when the bombardment of some historic fortress is represented. How massive seems the masonry, how adamantine the walls. Next day, passing the scene of those terrific explosions of overnight, you perceive that the whole thing is a screen of lathe and pasteboard—in Lucknow plaster and stucco. Coming to it fresh from the master-works of Delhi and its neighbourhood, where all is beautiful and true—the red sandstone real and the marble genuine—I was not only disappointed, I was even disgusted. This is just the place to break the heart, and arouse the prophetic ire of a Ruskin. How he would denounce these grandiose edifices, as pretentious impositions, as utterly false and sham, as standing untruths and violations of all the higher moralities of art.

In point of taste most of the architecture equally offends. The blending of the styles of the West with those of the East, which is the peculiarity

of Lucknow, and has produced what may be called an Indo-Italian school—an influence attributable to the presence of European adventurers at the Court—no doubt possesses the charm of novelty, and in one or two instances is not without a certain effectiveness of its own, but the general result is bizarre and meretricious. The prevailing hue is an ugly ochraceous tint, the colour of the wash with which the plaster exteriors are daubed, and the predominant device, a clumsy chub-like fish, the heraldic emblem of the Nawabs. One of the most noted buildings is the Kaisar Bagh,—an enormous court, said to have cost a million of money, of which more must have found its way into the pockets of speculators than was expended upon the structures, for there is no adequate result for such an outlay, and the place was a hotbed of corruption. Adorning the walls of the Kiasar Bagh, green-tailed mermaidens cannot fail to strike the eye, while on one of the gateways some delineations of female figures *au naturel* convey the most remarkable con-

ception of the anatomy of the human form divine. With a nice smack of vulgarity the gateways are called "Lakhi," or Ten Thousand Pounders, but if they deserve the title, they are not worth the money. Neighbour to it, towering aloft, is a bristling monstrosity crowned with gilded metal work, called the Kaisar Pasand. It looks like a grand advertisement shop, or the mosaic establishment of an ambitious clothier. Another marvel is the Chuttur Munzil, or Umbrella Palace, so yept from the gilt parachutes of its roof—a Boodhist emblem that does not readily lend itself to architectural treatment. Then there is the Husainabad Imam-bara, with its gateway, garden, tanks, and mosque, a truly Rosherville conception of the oriental. In the yard is a stucco Taj some twenty or thirty feet high—a model of the gem at Agra,—fancy it, ye gods! At the further end is a hall filled with chandeliers of pea-green and deep red glass gilded like gingerbread. In my innocence, I for a moment supposed I had made my way into

an emporium for crystal, but I discovered that they were implements in the illuminations of the Mohurram, the great festival of the Shiah Mahomedans in celebration of the martyrdom of the sons of Ali. Nor must I forget a place in the catalogue to the crown of all the architectural glories of the capital of Oude, La Martinière—a fantastic pile of pastry-cook's work, in which all the orders and most of the disorders of architecture have been ingeniously combined.

With the exception of the last, whose objective is better than its architectural design (it is an endowed school), these, or the most of these fabrics, as well as others which I have not enumerated, if externally hardly even whited sepulchres, within were literally full of all uncleanness, for they were the seraglios and harems of the satraps of Oude,—as worthless a band of sensualists as ever pandered to self-indulgence or misgoverned a people. It must not be assumed that Lucknow was the antique capital

of an ancient dynasty. Rather was it the mushroom seat of an upstart house. Oude, perhaps, afforded the most signal example of the fact, of which, singularly enough, the three best known and most influential of the great feudatories, as they are termed, the Maharajahs of Cashmere, Gwalior, and Indore, are the most striking of existing instances, that the so-called independent princes of India are largely made up of mere *parvenus* of menial birth, many of whom are the direct creatures of our rule. Formerly Oude was a Soubah or province of the Mogul Empire, administered by a Nizam or Vicegerent. The late, its only, dynasty had its origin in a Persian trader, by name Saadat Ali Khan, who, settling in Delhi, somewhere in the earlier half of the last century, and indicating a capacity for affairs, was by Mahomed Shah appointed Soubahdar of Oude. The history of his successors is an unbroken record of British intervention, without which the sway of a set of tyrannical debauchees, with their attendant pimps and parasites, could never

have been maintained over outraged subjects. During the reign of his grandson Sooja, Warren Hastings, by the prostitution of British arms, added Rohilcund to the territories of the Nawabs. During that of Sooja's son, Asaf ud Dowlah, again Hastings furnished a British brigade for the repression of his people, and the spoliation of the Begums was the price. It was in the time of this prince that Lucknow was elevated to the dignity of head city, whence date all of its splendours, such as they are. The previous capital of Oude had been Faizabad, itself scarcely less modern, though near the site of an ancient Hindoo city, famed as the birth-place of the hero of the Ramayana. On Asaf's death a struggle for the succession took place, when Sir John Shore, Governor-General, deposed the occupant of the *Musnud*, imposing the rival claimant instead. In 1819, Ghaziuddin Haidar, at the instigation of Lord Hastings, threw off his allegiance to the court of Delhi, and declared himself an independent monarch. On the

death of his successor, another dispute as to inheritance arose, when the British Resident, Colonel Low, by a *coup d'état*, unseated the sitting member, and bestowed the place on a nominee of his own. The last king was Wajid Ali, who, in 1856, Lord Dalhousie being Governor-General, was dethroned for misrule, and deported to Calcutta, while Oude was annexed to the British dominions in India. After that, and partly on account of that—the deluge, that terrible flood of mutiny and revolt that all but swept away the British Raj.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TAJ.

TRUE Agra has other things to show besides the Taj—things that of themselves would make the reputation of any other place. It boasts a fort the equal, if not the superior, of that at Delhi, with marble palaces and pearly mosques of even greater beauty. In the immediate neighbourhood, at Secundra, is the magnificent mausoleum of Akbar, the Louis Quatorze, or Peter the Great of India, with its superb entrance gateway, and—unlike the other sepulchral monuments of his race in its absence of domes—itself rising in terraces, pavilion upon pavilion, the lower ones of red sandstone, the topmost of white marble—the whole in form like a vast oblong pagoda. In contrast with it, as delicate and graceful as that is grand and gigantic, is the bijou tomb of It-

mudood Dowlah, erected to her father by the celebrated Noor Jehan, the wife of the Emperor Jehangeer. Notwithstanding these, beautiful as they are, the Taj is Agra. It is the Taj that takes the traveller there, and to look on the Taj alone would be ample requital for a voyage to India and back. After I had visited it, and while yet under the first fascination of its marvellous loveliness, I wrote down my impressions. Looking over them now in cold blood they seem ludicrously ecstatic, still the mere exaltation of tone is perhaps of itself the highest tribute to the magic of its spell.

On Sunday, in the cool of the evening, I set out alone, in the little phaeton I had hired at the hotel, to view the Taj. Already, as I drove along the dusty road, through cantonments, past thatch-roofed bungalows standing in their compounds, the moon with Indian splendour was sailing high in a clear, blue, cloudless, starlit heaven. Entering under an arch into a spacious courtyard, I got out at the foot of a flight of steps, leading

up to a vast gateway, like those that elsewhere conduct to the place of sepulture of India's mighty dead, as at Humayoon's tomb and at Secundra. Passing beneath the lofty vaulted ceiling of the portal, before descending the steps on the further side, what vision of loveliness in purest white is that which, at the end of a long narrow vista of dark green foliage, now greets the beholder's gaze—those full-breasted, snowy, clustering domes, standing on no foundation made with hands, but floating in ether like a swan-group on crystal waters? At last it is the heavenly Taj. The approach is along a straight avenue, lined by tall cypresses. At every step the Taj seemed to mount up before me in larger proportion, in more distinctness, and in greater beauty. Halfway is a raised white marble platform, containing a small basin with a fountain. On its surface the broad-leaved water-lily was floating, and in its depths gold and silver fish were darting. The moon mingled its beams with the shadows of the trees, the air was heavy with the perfume of bright-

hued flowers; a deathly stillness reigned around, while over all rose the alabaster shrine in all its vestal chastity.

Advanced to the foot of the avenue, I was confronted by what appeared to be a long wall, to the top of which a masked flight of steps conducted me, discovering a paved estrade of great dimensions, with a three-domed mosque at one extreme, and opposite at the other its Jawab or "response." A high raised white marble square, or *chubootra*, as it would be called in India, occupies the centre, having stationed upon each of its corners a lofty cupola-crowned circular tower—like a marble Pharos. Upon this beacon-guarded base rests the monument itself, all compact of marble Parian-white, from base to soaring dome-top. The lower portion is a vast cube-like keep, except that the angles are truncated, so as to constitute an irregular octagon of four larger and four smaller faces. In each of the greater sides, set as it were in a frame, is contained a huge pointed arch, excavated at the crown into a deep shadowy con-

cave, chiseled into numberless flaky facets, a smaller but similar embayed arch filling each of the lesser sides. Encircling the summit of the octagon, whose contour it follows, runs a parapet, at each of the angles of which projects upwards a dwarf minaret. Within, upon the roof, reposes a colossal central dome swelling out, and then tapering to a point, from which shoots in air a golden pinnacle holding a glittering crescent at its peak, while grouped around as satellites rest four cupolas, topped with bulbous globes. The first dazzling effects over, I perceived that the uniform whiteness, as I had supposed it to be, is relieved here and there by inscriptions in Arabic characters, and scrolls of black marble inlay. Long I walked round and round the lovely wonder, gazing into it, and looking up at it. The moon hung right over the centre dome. Now I slowly advanced, till the lustrous snow-capped orbs fell into shadow; then I receded backwards by degrees, till the moon burst upon the centre sphere in full effulgence. Next I mounted by many steps

the spiral stair to the top of one of the round minars, and sat under the open cupola, looking upon the scene, at the lucent canopies so far above, and at the garden lying in dark shadow at my feet. Then I descended and paced up and down the long terrace by the river front, with the glistening Taj on one side, and on the other the gleaming waters of the blue Yamuna. Finally, with a subdued feeling of awe, I ventured within the precincts of the fane itself. A lantern held by a native showed me that I was in a lofty vaulted chamber, a white marble cavern indeed, the centre of the floor enclosed by a screen of perforated marble lattice work, so exquisitely wrought it seemed a web woven by Nereids from the spume of the sea. Within, side by side, are two cenotaphs, sarcophagus-shaped, a larger and a smaller one, the former of Shah Jehan and the other of the Lady of the Taj. Both are of white marble, festooned and garlanded with floral mosaics of inlaid agate, heliotrope, cornelian, lapis lazuli, and other precious stones. The chamber is famed

for the beauty of its echo, as befits the voice of such a shrine. I made bold to violate the stillness of the sanctuary by a note or two, as clear as I could shape them. I might have saved myself all trouble, for however rough the initial sounds may be, though they were raucous as those of Codrus himself, they are caught up in the vaulted ceiling, and verberated and reverberated, till they become transmuted into tones of the most exquisite sweetness, finally dying away in the distance in a note so soft that it might well be the spirit-voice of the lovely Mumtaz calling from the regions of the blest. At the end of a subterranean passage, in a crypt beneath, two humbler monuments mark the spot where obscurely enough lie the remains, if aught exists, of the author of all this splendour, and of her to whom it was dedicated.

Perhaps a few figures, especially to the statistically minded, will afford a more adequate conception of the magnificence of this monument than any amount of mere word painting. It is

said to have taken twenty thousand workmen twenty-two years to complete, and is computed to have cost between two and three millions of our money, although the labour was forced and underpaid, and much of the material the gift of neighbouring princes. The marble plinth on which it stands is 18 feet in height, and 313 feet square. The mausoleum itself covers a square of 186 feet, each of the four towers is 137 feet high, and 213 feet measure the altitude of the centre dome. Thus the Taj though a statuette in its perfection of finish, and the costliness of its material, is in reality vast as a cathedral. Nevertheless it belongs more to the realms of sculpture than of architecture, and as such it must be judged.

The Taj was erected, as I have said, by the Emperor Shah Jehan as the mausoleum of his favourite consort, Urjumund Banoo Begum, whose *nom de caresse* was Mumtaz Mahal, "the Pride of the Palace," and the word Taj is supposed to be merely the last syllable of Mumtaz.

She was the niece of her husband's step-mother, the famous Noor Jehan, and, according to tradition, herself endowed with beauty alike worthy of that relationship and the shrine that was to perpetuate her memory.

Thus I have attempted the impossible, to describe the indescribable. Architectural pedantry, ignoring the conceptions and emotions it was designed to embody and awaken, may carp at it for its stiffness of outline, its blankness, the absence of projections to produce the play of light and shade, its want of structural signification, with other technical fault-finding, but to me the Taj was a frozen elegy. It is the one perfect thing I have seen in all my life, the single thing that exceeds all expectations however great, and realises every ideal. I came to it fresh from the master-pieces of Delhi, as I had come to them from newly gazing on Himalayan snows. There I had been constrained to confess how poor, after all, even in its highest efforts, is the handiwork of man compared

with the architecture of Nature. But here I was hardly conscious whether I was the spectator of a triumph of nature or of art. For once it seemed as though art had assumed the simplicity and sublimity of nature in its grandest moods, or that nature had put aside freak and caprice and consented to be circumscribed within the limits and methods of art.

I have known some who, on looking on the Taj for the first time, have burst into tears, and indeed in the perfection of anything, of beauty more especially, there is something touching. I cannot pretend that I was affected to such exquisite sensibility, but this I can say, that after I had taken a last look at the Taj, and turned my back upon its gardens, I carried with me through the silent lines, over which the moon was now sinking low, a heart heavier than I had almost ever known it before.

About twenty-two miles from Agra, is Futtehpore Seekree—a place famed for the grandeur of its architectural monuments. Acropolis-like, they

cluster upon the top of so small ridge of hill, whose base, with a portion of the adjoining lowlands, a high embattled wall includes, within which goatherds and cultivators of the soil have now made their homes. Here Akbar designed a capital which should be worthy of his fame. So thickly crowded are the various edifices of this city of the past, that their mere enumeration would occupy too long. Perhaps the chief feature is a vast court called the Durgah, or Holy Place, with a sternly grand mosque on one side, and on another a giant barbican, the most stupendous in the country, well named Boland Darwaza, or Great Gate. On the flagged pavement of the Durgah stands a little snow-white shrine of marble, the tomb of one Shekh Suleem Chistee, of whom more anon, which is reputed to afford the most exquisite example of *jallee* that exists. Among the buildings, one goes by the name of Hide and Seek Palace, with double walls and narrow corridors, where, as is told, the consorts of the Emperor used to amuse themselves

at bo-peep. In an adjoining court, the pavement of which is arranged as a *pucheese* board, Abkar, seated on a throne of stone, played at Indian backgammon, with his queens for pawns.

Another strange fabric is a low tower containing a single domed apartment, in the midst of which stands a massive richly sculptured pillar, with a huge overhanging capital, whose top reaches to one half the height of the interior. From the capital radiate four beams of stone to the corners, at each of which, supported on a bracket, is a quadrant of the centre capital, symbolical of the four quarters of the globe and world-wide dominion. This is the council chamber, where Abkar, throned on the centre capital, and his four great ministers of state seated on each of the quarter-circles, imposed laws on the universe. Without the "*Hathi Pol*," a gateway flanked by two gigantic elephants with intertwined trunks, is a most odd-looking structure, called Hiran Minar,—a round tower bristling all over with elephants' tusks of stone, a colossal representa-

tion, as it were, of our friend the fretful porcupine, under the cupola, over the top of which the Emperor was wont to witness his troops de-file beneath him in review.

These are only such of the buildings as occur to me as the more remarkable; but through court after court, from pile to pile one passes, though nearly perfect as if erected yesterday, all idle and deserted now, with not a sound to drown the echo of your footfall; but once bright and gay with all the bustle and pageantry of oriental state. The material is red sandstone, of the richest colour and the finest grain. The style, contradictory as the statement may seem, though elaborately ornate, is characterised by an almost grim severity, and so cyclopean are the dimensions and the massiveness of the masonry, that they might be the abodes of a gigantic and extinct race of man. What a striking contrast to the delicate grace, but white marble effeminacy of the palaces within the citadel of Agra. Legend, that picturesque but unreliable source of informa-

tion, which in India does duty so largely for history, gives a curious account of how these halls came to be forsaken. Upon the hill of Futtehpore Seekree, while yet in a state of nature, a religious recluse of great devoutness, the same whose beautiful tomb has just been noticed, had made his hermitage, the seclusion of which Akbar sadly disturbed when he began to found a city there. The holy man looked on with grave dissatisfaction, as he observed building after building rising in proximity to his cell, but held his peace. At last Akbar commenced to erect fortifications, threatening to turn the place into a camp. The anchorite could contain himself no longer, so approaching the Emperor he told him, with all the frankness to which a character for piety gives privilege, that he had made twenty pilgrimages to Mecca, and was therefore entitled to exceptional consideration; that the privacy of his devotions had been long invaded, though, with the forbearance of his class, he had said nothing, but now he could stand it no more; that either he or

the Emperor must quit, and he should be glad to know which it was to be. The humility of Akbar's reply is beautiful. "If it be your majesty's pleasure," said the great monarch, "that one of us two should go, let it, I pray you, be your slave." Thus Akbar turned to Agra, the city that was to hold his bones and to bear his name, and left to solitude and desolation those mighty edifices that are the wonder and the admiration of all who behold them.

CHAPTER X.

THE HOLY CITY OF BENARES.

WHAT Mecca is to the Mahomedan, what Jerusalem is to the Jew, Constantinople to the Greek, and Rome to the Latin—that to the Hindoo is the sacred city of Benares. Moreover, in its vicinity Sakya Muni first “turned the wheel of the law,” and preached the doctrines of Dharma and Nirvana. Thus not only is it the capital of one creed, it is the metropolis of another and an antagonistic faith, and in its dual sanctity claims the spiritual allegiance of one half the world. If Thebes were the city of a hundred gates, no less is Benares the city of a thousand temples. Within its precincts every deity of Hindooism is represented by its appropriate shrine, while, to each of the more popular divinities of that polytheistic pantheon a score or

two of temples has been dedicated. Of Siva, *par excellence*, Benares is the high place; and, in the estimation of Saivas, as such is extramundane, not, like the terrestrial Globe, posited on the crest of Ananta, the thousand-headed serpent of Infinity, but upborne on the prong-points of the trident of Mahadeo. To his consort, the dreadful Dourga, in divers names, in sundry forms are equal honours paid. Nor does eclectic Kasi refuse the tribute of its homage to his rival the more beneficent Vishnu. While here are tabernacles to Lakshmi and Kuber, for Wealth universally adored owns both a goddess and a god; to Krishna, the Indian Apollo, playmate of the Gopis, those sportive milkmaids; to Kama, "the flowery-bowed mind-bewitcher;" to Ganes, the elephant-headed god of wisdom; to weeping Rudra, and Indra Regent of the skies, with lesser fanes consecrated to such *dii minores* as Hanuman the monkey god, Nageswar the serpent god, Jwarahareswar the febrifuge god, Sitala the goddess of small-pox, and Ulai Chandi the female divinity of

cholera morbus. In the presence of a combined pantheon and pandemonium such as this, one is enabled to realise the full force of Burke's retort. When it was urged in favour of Warren Hastings that, in this same city of Benares, a temple had been set apart to his service, the orator replied, that as the Hindoos worshipped some gods from love and others from fear, so they erected shrines, not only to the benignant deities of light and plenty, but also to the fiends who preside over small-pox and murder.

The regulation of the city has been committed by Siva to Bhaironath, the deified kotwal or police magistrate of Benares, painted the orthodox blue, who, contrary to the legal maxim, has delegated his authority to an enormous stone truncheon, called Dandpan, which automatically belabours transgressors of the law, while, stationed at intervals along the outskirts, are divine constables to keep watch and ward over the sacred city.

Notwithstanding the multitude of temples,

few of them are less recent than a couple of centuries ago. Benares, though its origin is shrouded in the mists of a remote antiquity, and itself has been traced as far back as two thousand five hundred years, is practically a modern city. In its varying fortunes, wave after wave of demolition has swept over it, obliterating all that had gone before, the last and most destructive being that of the frantic iconoclast Aurungzeb, who sought to affix upon Holy Kasi, worst insult of all, the opprobrious epithet of Muhammadabad. Since his time, the Benares of to-day has arisen, and its present glory is chiefly ascribable to the Maratha revival of Hindooism.

The aspect of Benares is such as to recall bits of the old town of Edinburgh, or those parts of old Paris that still remain. The streets, alleys and lanes rather than streets, are steep and tortuous, with interminable flights of steps, and the houses, stone built, so lofty and close together as to exclude even the all-penetrating Indian sun. A

teeming population encumbers the thoroughfares; each person or group seems going to or coming from a bathing ghaut, *en route* to or returning from a temple. The women, of unmistakable Hindoo type, oval-faced and olive-complexioned, many of them classically beautiful, for Benares is a city of fair women, shuffle along barefooted in translucent muslins of warm tints, with caste marks red or white fresh imprinted on their foreheads. Extracted by the heat, the air is laden with a perfume which is not that of Araby, but a nauseous compound of the odours of rancid butter, decaying flowers, and melting sweetmeats. The first temple you visit, no doubt, is that of Bisheswar, one of the innumerable *aliases* of Siva, also called the Golden Temple, from the burnished plates with which its roofs are sheathed. Gradually insinuating your way through the throng that is making its exit or its entrance, what a scene presents itself to you in the inner court, where is the shrine itself. The tall slight Brahmin, with his look of supercilious superiority, his *upavita* or

sacred cord, and his ecclesiastical fondness for Peter's pence, in return for which he bestows a pinch of powder for the forehead of the worshipper, makes passes with peacock's feathers to ward off demons, or reads the Shastras in a drawling monotone, the nearly naked gosain with matted hair and body smeared with ash dust, the jogies, or "men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders," and, as in all lands, most zealous of votaries, the women struggling up to the god, a little gilded cross-legged figure in a niche, with a cocoanut oil cherag or cresset burning beside it, to render their offerings, ghee, rice, water, and white and yellow flowers, emitting the sickly sweetness of champak odours, each devotee, after making the gift, ringing a bell to call the god's attention to the fact—these with the conflicting crowds, the incessant din, the flashing of bright colours, and the breath of sickening smells, compose the scene in any of the more popular temples in the sacred city of Benares. Adjoining is the Gyan Kup, or Well of Knowledge, in which Siva

himself resides, and into which are poured the miscellaneous offerings of Hindoo religionists, where they putrefy and ferment at the bottom, exhaling a stench that would render knowledge revolting to all but the strongest stomach. The favourite steed of the god, a colossal bull of stone, seven feet in height, awaits at hand. At the other extremity of the city is the Durga Kund Temple, sacred to Siva's ferocious spouse, and famed for its bloody rites, where the ailing sacrifice living creatures,—for Kali, “the black goddess,” exacts a life for a life. It is also popularly known as the Monkey Temple, from the number of those animals frequenting it, of which Benares is reputed to possess nearly as many as of human inhabitants. Hindoo theologians have eclipsed our philosophers, for instead of making men into monkeys, they have elevated the Simian race into gods, on behalf of whom attendant Brahmins solicit alms. Here they are of all shapes and sizes, and of every hue, red and green and tawny, perched in every nook and cranny of the sacred edifice, performing all

these antics and fantastic tricks with which those who have ever seen the tribe are familiar, and to which their being divine has not made them the less addicted. The last fane to which the pilgrim resorts is the temple of Sakhi Binayaka, the witness-bearing Binayaka, for unless this deity be visited to certify to them, all his previous peregrinations have been in vain.

Nor is Benares a city wholly given to idolatry. Its artificers and craftsmen are not to be surpassed in industry or skill. A whole street is allocated to the makers of that beautiful brass work, for which the town is celebrated, and which is now so familiar. Less known, but not less to be admired, is its *kincob*, rich velvets, embroidered and brocaded with gold and silver, and those filmy shawls of silk and satin, inwoven with thread of gold, which are perhaps the most exquisite of Indian fabrics.

The distinctive feature of Benares is, however, its river front—a view unique and without a parallel. Along the Ganges, for miles and miles,

the country in every direction is low and level, but at Benares, for an extent of about two miles, the left bank abruptly rises into a commanding bluff, and upon that eminence the city stands. From the water's edge up to its very crest, the cliff is literally piled, tier upon tier, with buildings—palaces, mosques, and temples. The time to view the scene at its best is either at sunrise or sunset. For my part, I prefer it when the river is flooded with the warmer hues of expiring day, than when it is bathed in the colder, clearer light of dawn. The mode is to take a dinghee or native covered boat, seated upon the roof of which, as with almost imperceptible motion it slowly glides down the broad stream, the panorama appears to pass before one in review—now the pineapple top of a Hindoo temple, next a flat-roofed palace, with clustering columns, beetling cornices, and overhanging balconies; then a Moslem fane with rounded domes and shafted minarets—tinted some a rich chocolate colour, some a creamy white, and others a burnished gold. Broad flights of

stairs lead from the river's brink up to the city, human streams ascending and descending their steps from or to the ghauts—massive platforms of stone, while the shallows are vivid with dusky forms, and bright with the gleam of brazen lotas and floating draperies of red and green and yellow.

Thus on a Sunday evening I beheld it, as the last light of day was mellowing the sacred river. Heavy black smoke and low fires attracted my attention to one in particular of the ghauts—the Burning Ghaut, where, for the first time, I was to witness the process of cremation, of which one has heard so much. Among the Hindoos burning the dead is the universal custom, except in the case of Brahmins and infants, who may be buried, because they alone are supposed never to have committed sin, and to have bodies perfectly pure. I made the boatmen lie off the ghaut for a while, as I looked on at what was taking place. While there, I observed three bodies carried down on slight bamboo stretchers, the corpses covered with transparent muslin shrouds, and having strings of

yellow flowers upon their chests. The bearers, who are the relatives, as they carry the body, and while the burning is going on, keep constantly repeating in a monotonous sing-song, "Ram Ram sat hai" ("Ram," the hero Rama, who is one of the avatars of Vishnu, "Ram is salvation"). At the water's edge, the body is completely dipped in the sacred stream, the yellow flowers float on the surface during the immersion, and then fall back in their place upon the corpse, as the body is withdrawn, the wet muslin cerements now clinging close to the inanimate form. The face is then uncovered, and each of the mourners pours over it some handfuls of water from the Ganges. Next the logs are laid to burn it. One I saw actually in process of combustion in the centre of an oblong pile of blocks of wood. The flames were darting up and crackling right merrily, the smoke black and fuliginous hung over it, the only portion of the body visible being the feet, which were projecting beyond the end of the logs. Seated upon a tower hard by were the relatives

and friends, smoking, and regarding the tedious process of incineration. Fascinated by the strange spectacle, I watched it so intently that not till after some time did I become aware that the boat had been drifting nearer and nearer, and the smoke been blowing right into my face. Whether owing to the fumes I had been breathing, or to the impression produced by what I had witnessed, I felt squeamish for several hours afterwards.

My attention had been called to men who threw buckets of water upon the blackened spots, where burning had been completed, to wash the ashes into the river, where planks were placed to retain them, while others scooped them out again in baskets and piled them in mounds upon the banks. On inquiry, I was informed that the right to collect the charcoal was let to a contractor, who made such a good thing out of the sale of the residual products of poor humanity, as to have become one of the most prosperous and respected of the lieges of Benares.

The men engaged in the operations of burning

the dead all belong to the Doomra caste, the lowest and most looked-down upon of any in India, more despised than even that of the Mehter. Contact with them is pollution, involving, till penance done, the loss of caste fellowship. For the ends of life, as to cook food, no Hindoo may take fire from a Doomra, but they have the monopoly of the funeral flame, a portion of which, after death, the relatives of the highest or wealthiest Hindoo are fain to crave, often at a great price, in order that the pyre may be kindled.

In the middle of the river front of Benares, forming as it were the centre of the picture, are twin minarets of incomparable gracefulness, piercing the heavens like spears of Ithuriel—the minarets of the Mosque of Aurungzeb. An affecting incident belongs to one of them. Once there lived in Benares a very beautiful nautch girl. The sacred city is famed for the beauty of its dancing women, but she was the loveliest of them all. Two lovers had she, who importuned her

with their attentions, so to be rid of them, or to put their constancy to the proof, she told them she would accept whichever of them for her sake would jump from the top of one of the minarets of Alumgeer. One luckless lover leaped, and was dashed to pieces on the stones beneath. The other, more crafty, by some Dædalian contrivance of wings, managed to alight in safety. On claiming the prize, she required him first to take her to the top. She asked to be shown where his rival had fallen, then, without a word, bounded from the height, and died upon the spot where her lover had expired. From the summit of the same minaret, I took a last and bird's-eye view over the sacred river, and the Holy City, its thousand temples, and its myriad gods.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE VALE OF CASHMERE.

CASHMERE is the romance-land of India—the earthly paradise that native and alien, denizen and sojourner alike, long some day to behold. To the Hindoo, it is a “Khetr” (sacred precinct) of Kylas, and the scene of man’s regeneration in the Maha Yug; the Musulman esteems it as “Junat Puzir,” the equal of Elysium, as well as the original of Eden; while Elphinstone expresses the verdict of Europeans when he pronounces it “the most delicious spot in Asia or in the world.” Like all paradises, however, it is rather out of the way, the road to it is stiff, and but a few of the many ever reach it. When, therefore, in March 1877, destiny had decided to determine my residence in Calcutta, and my stay in India, I felt that I

should be perpetrating a grievous error were I to quit the country, and leave Cashmere unvisited.

“The Happy Valley” lies girdled round by a Himalayan zone, access to it being obtainable only over mountain passes. From the plains of Hindostan there are three principal routes, “the Murree,” “the Pir Panjal,” also named the “Imperial Route,” as being that made use of by the Mogul emperors; and “the Bannihal” or “Jumoo.” The last is by far the most direct and convenient; but, thanks to the exclusiveness and obstructiveness of the Jumoo Rajah, and the pliancy of the Indian Government, it is jealously closed to general travellers. The Pir Panjal was impassable from snow, so that there remained for me but the Murree route, the easiest if the most round-about.

From Calcutta, there was first a journey by train of thirteen hundred and eighty miles to Jhelum, where the railway ended; and then a sixty-eight miles dak to Rawul Pindee, whence the distance to Murree is forty miles. From there to Srinagar, the capital of Cashmere, is one hundred

and sixty-three miles, divided into thirteen stages. It is hardly necessary to state that I did not perform this long and somewhat tedious journey without drawing bridle.

My first halt was some thirty miles from Lahore, at Umritsur, "the Sacred City of the Sikhs," one of the most strikingly oriental-looking towns in India, the exterior of many of the houses being frescoed with mural delineations of wrestlers and warriors. The glory of Amrita Saras is, however, its "Golden Temple" to Hari—a casket-shaped structure of white marble and burnished metal, placed on an islet in the centre of a magnificent tank of pellucid water—"the Fount of Immortality," in whose life-giving liquid multitudes of Sikhs, of either sex and all ages, were dipping, and enclosed by the four sides of a spacious piazza of stately balconied palazzi. A causeway with golden lamps on marble supports conducts to the shrine, which within is a domed chamber, profusely ornate with gilding and colouring, studded with specular bits of glass, and was thronged with squatting de-

votes. In the midst of the floor, beneath a protective canopy, lay a large cushion of tissue of gold, while the chief Gooroo, a venerable greybeard clothed in snowy raiment, with a chowdry whisked away the flies that would irreverently alight upon it. Beneath the gilded pillow reposed "the Grunth,"—the *h* is silent—the sacred volume of the disciples of Nanuck and Govind. Outspread in front was a sheet containing cowries, or small shells, and copper pice, donations of the worshippers; and, as an Akalee sang and strummed upon a banjo, in all but melody like a Christy minstrel, Sikh women, leading by the hand their little ones, kept entering, circumambulated the Grunth below its bolster, and, after depositing their contributions in the offertory sheet, passed out again. The women were well grown and fair to look upon, a reason perhaps why they do not choose to muffle up their faces so much as the generality of the Indian sisterhood, an agreeable variation from so much of occult physiognomy. Their male relatives, the members of the Khalsa, besides being manly

and strong-built, are physically distinguishable by brushed-up beard and whiskers, tied in a knot on the top of the head under the rolls of a jaunty turban, and by their fiercely twirled mustachios, one of the points of the faith being never to cut a single hair from the moment of birth. Another, as befits a race of warriors, is always to carry upon their persons cold steel in some form next the skin. In the charge, uttering their battle cry of "Wah ! Gooroojee ke Futteh !" they let loose their untamed manes, by the ferocity of their aspect the better to strike terror into the hearts of their foes.

At the capital of the "Land of the Five Rivers" I again stopped, to buy tents and cooking utensils, and to lay in stores, such as tinned provisions, for I hardly expected a choice of shops in Cashmere. I also embraced the opportunity to see what there was to be seen at Lahore, a city that has played no small part in Indian history, and vied with Delhi and Agra in the favour of Mogul monarchs. With its grand but dilapidated, oft desecrated mosques

and ruinous serais, it is suggestive more of former than of present greatness. Those, together with a high-perched picturesque white fort, and the tomb of Runjeet Singh, "the Lion of Lahore"—a tawdry edifice of no pretensions to merit—form the architectural features of the Pentapotamian capital. Not least conspicuous and graceful figure of Lahore streets, and deserving at any rate a passing look, is the Punjaubi dancing girl, taller and statelier than her sister of Bengal, from whom she differs both in complexion and costume. Embroidered morocco slippers with pointed upturned toes and small as Cinderella's upon her feet, her limbs enveloped in amber-coloured silken trews tight-fitting from ankle to knee and baggy at the thighs, a zephyry doublet reaching to the waist, belted by a gaudy sash, with a scarf of gauze across her shoulder and over her head; the *ensemble*, despite of her colour a rich creamy yellow, of nose and ear jewels galore, of henna-tipped fingers, and almond eyes darker and more liquid from Kohol's tinct, not unlike a lovelocked cavalier of the time of the

Merrie Monarch, and a right gay and gallant one to boot: while to maintain the illusion she is sedulously attended by a couple of squires—her valet and musicianer. In the vicinity one visits Shadara, where is the splendid sepulchre of Jehangeer, the monument of the wifely devotion of the beautiful Noor Jehan, who sleeps close by; and Shalimar, “the House of Joy,” a pleasure garden of the sumptuous Shah Jehan, high walled, and resplendent within, amid groves of citron and orange laden with Hesperian fruit, marble pavilions, terraces, lakes, and fountains.

From Jhelum, I sent on my various cases to Murree, by Government bullock train, which might be sure, but was certain to be slow, myself proceeding to the important military depot of Rawul Pindee, whence, to give my things a chance of reaching Murree as soon as myself, I determined to visit the great frontier station of Peshawur, a hundred miles distant. About half way, I passed the night at Attock, memorable both in its aspect and its history. The name signi-

fies "Obstacle," conferred either because westward of it no devout Hindoo would proceed, or because it was considered a natural barrier. Overhanging the river frowns a castled crag, the Ehrenbreitstein of India, surveying a wide tract of desert, among whose arid *syrtes* the Indus has dissipated itself in the reticulation of a thousand channels, but, just before the Pass of Attock, it concentrates into a mighty, turbulent torrent, hurling itself with incredible velocity through *fauces* of dark slate, polished by the action of the water to the shine of black marble. It is bridged by boats, which must be removed when the snows melting on the Himalayas swell the stream. Here Alexander the Great, Tamerlane, and Nadir Shah are believed to have crossed to the conquest of India, and in their footsteps the invader of the future, if ever he come, will, no doubt, make his approach.

Peshawur, "the Advanced Post," a dusty city, freshened by the greenery of trees, occupies a small plateau in the surrounding plains, and overlooks a long, broad, fertile strath, dotted with mud-

walled villages and little fortalices, like the martello towers of the south coast of England, for defence against incursions of the hill men. Opposite, a sullen and impenetrable barrier—meet boundary of a mighty empire—rises a dark range of cindrous, serrated mountains, in which can be dimly descried the black chasm of the Khyber Pass,—“the Iron Gate of India,” rendered darker by the terrible associations that will for ever haunt it of the annihilation of Elphinstone’s army. Upon a mound, near its mouth, stands the so-called “neutral fort of Jumrood,” whither on account of danger to life from the cut-throats of the neighbouring hills, no British-born subject was allowed to go without an escort, which, of course, to gratify the mere curiosity of a traveller, one could neither seek nor obtain. I must say that it struck me forcibly at the place and time as highly discreditable to the Indian Government with its sensitive prestige, that such a state of things should be tolerated, and that it had not long ago seized and held the Khyber Pass, and

thus given security to the valley from the raids of lawless ruffians. In the bazaars, rubbing shoulders together, are to be met representatives of nearly every Afghan tribe—Peshawuris, Khyberis, Afreedis, Caubulis, and others, big-boned men, in filthy gaberdines, with matted locks, and cruel bird-of-prey countenances, while the shops display wonderfully effective local pottery, collections of arms, in which figure the long-barrelled jezail, and the pointed Pathan dirk, with dried fruits from far as Samarcand, and furs and skins from Astrakan.

From Rawul Pindee I tramped it to Murree, where I found my packages just arrived—Murree a pretty station on a summit, with dark hills, deep glens, and rapid streams, so soon to be gay with all the gaiety of an Indian Sanitarium, but now almost deserted except by natives. All around, by me so long untrodden, the snow lay white and peaceful as in a churchyard, something in the scene recalling an English Christmas like the yules of long ago. The day was spent in collecting coolies, and putting things in train

for the start upon the morrow. I had anticipated a lonely march into Cashmere; but, to my agreeable surprise I found, on my return to the hotel, that two other voyageurs had arrived on the same errand. With the freemasonry peculiar to meeting in out-of-the-way places, we were soon hand in glove, and two very pleasant fellows I found them—Scotchmen, and coffee-planters, one from Travancore, and the other from Ceylon. We arranged to ally our forces for the expedition into the Happy Valley, and in the evening, with a blazing fire of pine wood, and in high spirits, we dined most comfortably together. Early in the morning the start was effected, riding ponies, sumpter mules, khansamahs, bheesties, and coolies, some thirty souls all told, an imposing cavalcade we formed, as we defiled out of Murree, along the hillside, under the deodars. Doubling and once or twice trebling the marches, each night resting in dak bungalows, many of them wretched cribs, so unlike those under the English régime, five days brought us to the Pass of Baramoola, on topping

which first sight of the promised land, Cashmere, extended its beauties before us, its lakes and rivers, its mountains, and its poplared plains. All the way, our road had followed the course of the Jhelum river, an impetuous torrent, which day and night thundered beneath us in its rocky bed, with high-towering hills on either side, along whose slopes, on one or other of the banks, our path, broken by rivulets and cascades, led through pine woods. At Baramoola, the Jhelum, just about to enter on its headlong and unruly career, is a broad and tranquil stream, sedate and sluggish, as either Scheldt or Meuse. Here we transferred ourselves into doongahs—large punt-shaped boats, sheltered by roof and sides of reed matting. Midships is reserved for the charterer, where his bed is laid, and chair and table set for his meals. A family of water folk, from the tottering grandam to the puking infant, to whom the servants are added, inhabits the stern, which is also the kitchen. The modes of propulsion are tracking, punting, and paddling, one or all at a time, in which every-

body, but the infant in arms, bears a part. At first, the change from the energy of the march to the indolence of the doongah, where lazily reclining we surveyed the scene while being hauled along, was grateful enough, but after a little it became very tedious, even to producing restiveness. These craft are anything but good sea boots, so on coming to the great Wooller Lake, late in the evening, we moored to the shore for the night. I recollect, just before I turned in, it being bitterly cold, I put aside the mat, and looked out over what seemed an open polar sea with giant icebergs all around—peaks of the Himalaya—above which the stars were blinking bright. The great part of next day was spent in slowly progressing up the sinuous Jhelum, between low grassy banks, fringed with osiers, and patched with holts of willow. Nor was it till pretty late in the afternoon that we found ourselves fairly at length at the capital of Cashmere, where we put up at one of the river-side bungalows in the Harri Singh Bagh, which the munificence of the Jumoo Rajah

gratuitously places at the disposal of visitors. Here we decided to spend a week, partly to recruit after our hardships, and also for the purpose of investigating the place, and completing preparations for the expeditions on which we had severally resolved.

The vale of Cashmere is ovate in form, a hundred miles in length, by an average breadth of twenty-five miles, encompassed by a snow-wall of Himalaya, with peaks rising all around from ten to fifteen thousand feet in height. The floor of the valley, so to speak, appears, even at a short distance, a perfect plain, green with groves of poplar and willow, through which its winding river flows glassily in ample reaches. A closer inspection, however, as in traversing it, soon reveals that its surface is anything but a level, being broken up into alluvial tablelands of various extent, with deep rifts between. These elevated flats are called "kareewahs," and go far to support the local tradition (referring the dessication however to the intervention of Siva, or no less a person than Solomon,

according as the legend springs from a Hindoo or Mahomedan source), that once the valley formed the bed of an immense lake—in this instance, an inland sea, with its frozen peaks towering above it and around it and reflected upon its bosom, the sublimest surely the world has ever had to show.

Midway between the two extremes, and occupying a position on either bank of the Jhelum,—the fabled Hydaspes of the ancients—is placed Srinagar, Sirinagar, or Sreenugger, as it is indifferently inscribed—"the City of the Sun," with panorama of the valley spread around it from the splendid splintered crests of Pir Panjal to the broad brow of hoary Haramook, and at times even to the snowy summit of "the Naked Mountain" Nanga Parbat, otherwise Diarmul, "the King of the North," in stature six-and-twenty thousand feet. The city is relegated as far back as A.D. 500, and contains a population of about 150,000, more or less. It lies upon a flat, intersected by canals, diversified by orchards, and lined by stately avenues of poplar. Behind, is a limpid lake with islets, the

Dal, or city lake. In the immediate vicinity, the most conspicuous objects are the Tukht i Suliman, or Throne of Solomon, the Arthur Seat of Srinagar—an isolated point crowned by a small temple, whose antiquity is two thousand years, and the Harri Parbat, a lesser eminence, surmounted by a fort of Akbar. Just before reaching the city, the Jhelum forms a series of most extraordinary and graceful curves, which have given to that portion of the river the name Shaloon, and are supposed to have suggested the well-known loop figure in the pattern of Cashmere shawls. Like Venice, Srinagar is essentially a city of canals and waterways—"Kuls" is the vernacular—and its gondola is the Shikara—a much smaller doongah with a male crew only, and no resident family on board. To see the city, the best mode is to take boat. No doubt, as we are new arrivals, and presumably with wants to be supplied, those enterprising merchant tailors and keen rivals, Summud Shah and Syfoola Baba, will be lying in wait, eager to impress us into his own Shikara, and thus to

bag us from his opponent. We reclining in the centre of the boat, luxuriously upon a soft Yarkundi Numdah, with head on pillow, away she speeds to the powerful strokes of her lusty crew of eight, equally divided between stern and bows. The implement used is a single-bladed heart-shaped paddle. Now we dance along with short, quick, paddling strokes, then we lift through the water with a long, strong, deep-digging stroke, that makes the craft pulsate from end to end. As a signal to change the stroke the fogleman raps with his paddle on the gunwale, chanting the words,

“Taza ba Taza now ba now,”

Freshly fresh and newly new.

the refrain of that ghazul of Hafiz that begins

“Minstrel tune some novel lay,

Ever jocund ever gay, .

Call for heart-expanding wine,

Ever sparkling, ever fine.”

Thus dreamily green bank and glassy water glide by till we come to the first bridge. Srinagar can prefer claims to an alternative title, that of the City of Bridges—“Kadals,” as they are de-

nominated, of which there are seven—quaint structures, hundreds of years old, of “the incorruptible Himalayan cedar, the invaluable Deodora,” as Von Hügel eulogises it, and with quaint piers, in shape, inverted pyramids, often rendered strikingly picturesque from trees branching out of them. With the first bridge, the Ameeri Kadal, buildings begin to cluster thick on either side down to the water’s edge, mostly high wooden houses with pent roofs, whose thatch, green with weeds and grass, has given occasion to poetical travellers to rhapsodise about the garden-topped domiciles of the City of the Sun, with their variegated parterres. Broad flights of stone steps lead down to the stream, in which women in loose purple gowns with wide sleeves are washing clothes, while, above, others may be seen pounding rice or corn in mortars with great two-handed pestles. Interspersed among these humbler edifices, come in view, on one side or the other, now a mosque with four-cornered roof, the apex crowned by the golden globe that in Cashmere does duty for the crescent, then the

white walls and tinfoil cone of a Hindoo temple. Most prominent, but least picturesque of all the river-side objects, is the tawdry garishly painted frontage of the so-called palace. In imposingness next to it, on opposite sides of the river of course, are the competitive establishments of the two rival traders—tall, well-to-do looking edifices of wood, not untastefully carved and coloured. Entering with our host—for the perfectly disinterested attentions of which we are the recipients make us feel more as guests than customers—we seat ourselves upon musnuds in an upper room. Upon the soft thick-carpeted floor, the Head and his assistants proceed to display manifold and wondrous fabrics, while upon a Cashmere tray an attendant hands round a soolkee or tea-decoctor, containing an infusion made of the brick tea from Yarkund, and confits in saucers to sweeten it. Meantime, at our feet are spread those famous shawls, costing some from two to three thousand rupees each; chuddars as warm as they are light; exquisitely figured opera cloaks, of every tint and

hue, that would be the admiration and the envy of Covent Garden ; bales of Puttoo cloth, a rough home spun, of which a suit will be made to your fit all for sixteen shillings, a price the despair of Moses, with the quality and all but the make of Poole ; and pieces of pushmeena, the woven undercoat or pushm of the shawl goat of Thibet, worth a pound a yard, and so fine that you can draw it through a ring. Lifting one's eyes from the floor and looking out upon the river, the bridges, and the quaint structures of wood, beyond which the sun is going down, and then turning them inside again to the picturesque and costly wares strewn around, and handled by shopmen who might be Caliphs and Grand Viziers, the scene cannot fail to impress you as

“ Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.”

On another occasion, we would visit Savana, the great jeweller, where a similar entertainment would be given, only, instead of pushmeena and puttoo, would be exhibited serais, claret-jugs, goblets, and

tankards, of exquisite form, and of lovely diapered Cashmere work, with that sugary whiteness, which is said to be due to the use of apricot juice, and is, I fear, as evanescent as it is beautiful, with many little knick-knacks, such as salt-cellars in the model of Kangri—those earthen jars, covered with wicker work, and filled with live charcoal, that Cashmere women in cold weather carry beneath their petticoats to keep themselves warm, giving them so universally an interesting appearance, that I could not make it out, till one day I observed a woman, greatly to my astonishment, bring forth a Kangri. Another manufacture consists of works of the same description in a peculiar silvered copper, little short of as beautiful as those of the more costly metal. Again other shops exhibit articles of papier-maché, a further speciality for which Cashmere is celebrated, and in these last magazines we became versed in the rose, the shawl, and the devil, and rajah patterns.

In making our way from one to the other of these various places of traffic, we had ample op-

portunity of observing both the city and its population. The streets, rudely causewayed, were little better than the beds of open sewers, as offensive to the feet as to nose and eye. Municipal control or sanitary regulation there was none, nor were we surprised to hear that periodically the inhabitants are decimated by small-pox, fever, and cholera, which in some degree are chronic inmates. The world-renowned beauty of Cashmere women, to the disappointment of ourselves, as it has been to that of so many others, proved to be a delusion and a snare. Like so many other popular beliefs, that also is a popular error. The type is not pleasing, the aquiline nose is too strong, the cheek bones too prominent, and the red of the complexion too high in colour. In classic shape and feminine softness, they are not at all comparable with the many very lovely women of the Indian plains. All the time I was in Cashmere, I saw but one beautiful woman, but she was perfect in form and feature, a coolie girl, who with her aged father was, like a fawn,

ascending a lonely precipitous mountain in the Lolab, as I was coming down. In addition, they are far from being cleanly in person, and their habitual garb—a loose purple dressing-gown, gives them a most slovenly appearance—how different from the saree and the salooka of Bengal and Hindostan! In mitigation of judgment, it is only fair to remember that in Cashmere, as everywhere else in the East, only women of the humblest classes expose themselves to public gaze, with whom good looks are not more likely to obtain, than amongst those of corresponding grades in other countries; while for generations, till within quite recent times, every female child who gave promise of beauty was regularly exported to India, for the purpose of prostitution, with, of course, the resulting survival of the unfittest.

After a week spent in this fashion—morning levees at the door of our bungalow of all kinds of traders, artificers, and others; workers in cloth, in leather, and in metals, dealers in precious

stones from Yarkund and Kashgar; with exhibitions of fighting rams; afternoon expeditions to the city and its shops; and evenings, after dinners of wild duck (a shilling a brace), and excellent mutton (a penny a pound), contemplatively passed over the subsequent coffee in gazing at the tranquil Jhelum, and talking of other days and far-distant lands—when our energies at length had been recruited, we resolved, somewhat reluctantly, to part, each going his own gait. My friends were bent on Shikar, one a dead shot of elephant and bison. Having engaged the Shikaris, and furnished up their rifles, they departed each to his lonely nullah, after baloo, markhor, and ibex; and I, in quest of scenery, to tramp thirty miles a day over every valley in Cashmere. My friends had obviously looked down upon my programme as somewhat effeminate, and in these quiet evenings after dinner by the Jhelum river, amidst other subjects of speculation, I had been at pains to explain to them in self-defence that I had never been able to comprehend the pleasure that

consisted in taking unoffending life, and that love of sport meant a less advanced stage in the progress of human development, relating back to the time when man was but a beast of prey, with claws for fingers, and fangs for teeth. But these considerations naturally failed to induce my friends to forego their slaughtering projects, and accompany me.

From the trunk valley of Cashmere, so to speak, there branch out in all directions minor vales, each of its own peculiar beauty and character, of which the two largest are the Liddar and the Sind, taking their names from the streams that water them. My purpose was to ascend the former, and then by a mountain path strike across into the Sind valley near its head, returning down it to Srinagar.

Before setting out upon an expedition, you receive from the *Baboo ke Dubter*, the bureau at Srinagar which attends to English wants, a *purwannah*, or requisition to the head men of villages and all others whom it may concern to furnish the traveller with coolies, and with supplies at a fixed tariff, as fowls,

eggs, milk, for yourself, and rice and grain for your servants. All other provisions, as tinned soups, potted meats, biscuits, and a variety of other stores, are taken with you in *kiltas*, long leather-covered baskets carried on the backs of the coolies.

Of all the wanderings in all parts of the world that I have made, there is nothing equal to journeying in Cashmere. It is a merry Zingari sort of a life, a nomadic existence, roaming about as it were in the forest of Arden. For the nonce, you are emancipated from the irksome conventionalities and restraints of civilisation and society, and seem to have got back to the primitive joys of a state of nature. There are no railway trains to catch, no steamboats to hurry on board of, no hotel bills to be settled in the morning. After leaving Srinagar, your shouldari tent is your house and your home. At mid-day a halt is called, for a rest and refection, at some spot selected for its picturesqueness, where, recumbent *sub tegmine fagi*, upon a grassy knoll, by a crystal stream, you let the noontide heats abate.

At evening, when the day's march is ended, another site must again be chosen, this time some sheltered spot to pitch your tent for the night, on a little lawn of the wooded hillside, or else under the bedewing blossoms of a fruit tree on the soft sward of an orchard in the valley. As soon as the place is fixed upon, one servant, with the help of the coolies, busies himself in putting up the tent, stacking the kiltas round its mouth, and making the bed. The Lumbadar, or head man of the village, if indeed he has not beheld you afar off and awaits your arrival, appears upon the scene, to whom the Khansamah makes known his wants of fowl and milk and eggs, which he at once departs to procure. Meanwhile the chef puts three stones together, scrapes out a little earth with his hand, kindles a fire of brushwood, and at once you have a range whose productions would do credit to much more elaborate culinary apparatus. The coolies have now gathered in front of your tent to be paid off. In Cashmere all journeys are divided into

parows or stages, of about the average length of about five *kos* each. A *kos* is a very variable standard of linear measurement, whose precise length I was never able to determine, all I know being that they appeared short enough in the morning, but often terribly long at the end of the day. However, it is said to be equal to about two English miles. For each *parow*, each coolie is entitled to sixpence. Although I always travelled light, I found I could never reduce their number below eight, as, besides impeding them on the march, it does not do to overload them. There is a fixed amount beyond which they are not bound to carry, but that is too heavy at all events for quick work. I also discovered that it was the best plan to change the coolies whenever practicable at the end of every stage, in that way I was generally able to cover three marches daily. The labour is undoubtedly forced, it is even said that the service is annexed as a condition to the tenure of their holdings, for the coolies,

generally speaking, are Zemindars. No doubt the sum sounds miserably inadequate, still it must be considered that it is the full market value of their labour, and the pittance, wretched as it is, so impoverished is the Cashmere cultivator of the soil, is a welcome boon, except at certain agricultural seasons, such as harvesting, when their compulsory withdrawal from their occupations may work positive hardship. Of all people I have ever come in contact with, the poor Cashmere coolie, of great physical strength and endurance, but with every particle of spirit ground out of him, is the most long-suffering and uncomplaining. At the end of the day, when they gather in row with suppliant hands in front of your tent to be paid off, of course they ask for bukseesh,—what Eastern does not on every possible occasion. If you think they have kept well up on the march, you give them an additional anna or two each, for which they go away salaaming you quite contented. If on the other hand you should tell them they have

lagged behind, and don't deserve reward, they retire without a murmur and salaam you just the same. Will it be credited, that out of their wretched hard-earned doles the miserable Maharajah and his miserable myrmidons exact a squeeze? Often have I been asked not to say what I had given, lest a part of it should be filched from them by force. By the time that the distribution has been made, the deft Khan-samah has arranged his handiwork on the little table, placed at the door of your tent—capital tinned palestine or hotch potch, a stew of mourgee and potatoes, seasoned with onions and ginger, and perhaps, to wind up, an omelette au confiture. By-and-by, with a cup of tea, the fatigues of the day are forgotten, and then, after a few contemplative astronomical observations of the stars brightly flickering overhead, above the snowy tops of the mountains, you are ready to turn in. Never in my life have I slept so soundly as under canvas, or awakened so thoroughly refreshed in the morning. True, in

wet weather it is not quite so pleasant, when it rains two or three days and nights in succession, and then as it can come down only among the mountains. There is nothing for it but to choose the available spot best protected from the elements, dig a trench round your tent, and lie up till the sun comes out again. The first few hours are well enough, but gradually the little cutting fills with water, the bit of ground within gets sodden, wet begins to trickle on the inside down the walls and roof of your tent, and an atmosphere of dampness to pervade it, painfully suggestive of rheumatics and influenza, while all the live-long day you must lie on your narrow bed, listening to the dreary plashing and invoking fine weather, but when at last the sun does break out again, these *désagrémens* are forgotten, or the remembrance of them serves but to heighten the sense of present enjoyment..

On my way to the mouth of the Liddar valley, I passed through miles of country under saffron

cultivation—the staple of one of the chief industries of Cashmere, but, like everything else, a Government monopoly. The appearance was veritably that of a vast field of the cloth of gold, wonderfully contrasting with the green of other parts of the valley, the white of the mountains, and the blue of the skies. I made a slight detour to visit the renowned ruins of Martund—Mutton the natives pronounce it,—the remains of the Pandu-raised Temple of the Sun, as old as our era. It marks the sight of a capital once probably not unworthy of such a high place of worship, but of which no other vestige now remains. In the simplicity of its trefoil arches, the ponderous massiveness of its masonry, but above all in the solitude and sublimity of its situation, looking out over the breadth of the valley upon mountains of eternal snow, I have met few ruins that speak to one more impressively than those of the Sun-Temple of Martund. Builder and priest and worshipper have alike disappeared; the very nature of the rites they

celebrated is a matter of dispute; corroded and weather-stained, their shrine itself is slowly mouldering away; but that mysterious and indestructible principle of religion, in all ages and climes the most potent that has ever actuated the breast of man, is as vital to-day as it was that remote yesterday, and will be in as distant a to-morrow. In various parts of the valley, as at Awantipoor, there are other remains of temples only second to that which I have just noticed, some of them once associated with capitals and cities. When one tried to reconstruct and repeople Cashmere as then it must have been, and next compared it with its enslaved and pauperised condition as at present, one was compelled regretfully to admit that the march of centuries does not always signify human melioration and advancement.

The Liddar valley is a wide cultivated strath at its mouth, narrowing to a gorge about half-way up. Just at the contraction is Eishmakam, one of the loveliest spots in the whole land, well named "Delightful Halting Place," where, as I have

often said to myself, if ever I were to make my home in Cashmere, I should pitch my tent for good. Midway up a green hill-side, stands a large square-walled structure like a fort. It is, however, only a larger specimen of those Mahomedan Zearuts that form one of the prettiest features of Cashmere landscape, little sanctuaries of wood or stone, generally perched on some hill top commanding a wide prospect, as notably that on the hill of Shakurdin, and embowered in wood, with the sepulchral iris, lilac or white, blooming on the grass mounds of former saints who have departed to their rest. In this monastery I was told that there resided no fewer than five hundred Rishis. Below, in a little wooded cleft, nestles an upland hamlet, Eishmakam itself, in front lies stretched the level fertile vale of the Liddar, threaded by its glistening stream, and confined on either side by wooded slopes, till all merges in the broader vale of Cashmere, with its white boundary wall beyond. Above the hamlet, the valley shrinks to a wooded defile of towering heights, just wide

enough to hold its stream, with here and there in the far background up towards the head of the glen, high snow-capped summits rising over all. Upon a little grassy mead, just beneath the monastery, and overlooking this exquisite scene, my tent was pitched. But a fortnight before, I had entered Srinagar to find myself, as it were, in the Arctic regions in mid-winter, but at Eishmakam spring suddenly burst forth in all its freshening promise. In those favoured climes, the vernal season does not advance half-heartedly, or like a coquette with now a passing gleam of sunshine, then a long spell of gloom recalling winter, rather, like Pallas from the front of Zeus, she trips upon the stage in panoply of beauty. The sun was bright and warm, the air was balmy, blossoms white and pink and violet powdered the orchards of peach and pear and apple, in idyllic glee kids and lambkins sported on the tender shoots, I caught myself involuntarily listening for the pastoral pipe of Pan, while cool and clear the stream coursed by with soothing melody. So

entranced was I by the witchery of the scene, and such new life did reawakening nature seem to impart to me, that I was constrained to break the march, and tarry here a spring-tide day. Sitting by the edge of the river, I jotted down, to while away the idle hours, a few verses in my pocket-book, which, in fairness to the Liddar, I feel bound to reproduce here, for it could have no greater tribute to its charms, than that they should have been able to arouse, though but to doggerel, a heart so dulled as mine.

LINES TO THE LIDDAR.

Flow downward, bright Liddar, from mountains of snow,
Flow swiftly, and gladden thy valley below,
Dark Winter has fled, with its cold and its gloom,
And Spring, like a bride, waits thee radiant in bloom.

Full many from far lands have gazed on thy stream,
And thou hast reflected their each fairest dream,
Yet never before didst thou lovelier shine,
Or meet with a gaze more enraptured than mine.

I pause on the brink of thy murmuring tide,
And list to thy waters as onward they glide,

But what they would tell me falls strange on mine ear,
Do thou then, kind Liddar, their meaning make clear.

"They say, if to thee worldly triumphs are vain,
And a lot that is humble thou dost not disdain,
Why, stranger, thus lonesome through foreign lands roam?
Make Liddar thy dwelling, our valley thy home.

When cares or repinings disquiet thy breast,
The song of our billows will lull thee to rest,
Refreshment, when faint, thou wilt drink from the spring,
And to plunge in our waters new vigour will bring."

Fain, fain would I, Liddar, thy bidding obey,
And ne'er more from thee and thy sweet valley stray,
The slave of a fate that I may not control,
My doom is to wander, nor e'er find the goal.

The boon thou dost proffer, thou canst not bestow,
For peace hath no home on this wide world below,
The weary can find it alone in the grave,
And only 'tis thine in the depths of thy wave.

Flow then in thy beauty, flow ceaselessly by,
Thy springs never fail thee, thy fountains run dry!
With contentment and plenty, thy borders abound!
The voice of the dove in thy coverts resound!

We part—I may linger no more on thy strand,
Afar yet to wander o'er sea and o'er land,
Enshrined in my heart, though eclipsed from my view,
Farewell, lovely Liddar, for ever adieu.

EISHMAKAM, 21st April 1877.

A long day's march above Eishmakam is the village of Palgam, the last inhabited place of any consequence in the valley, the way thither becoming at each step wilder and wilder. Here the Liddar bifurcates right and left. Palgam is noted for its stalwart coolies, the finest in Cashmere. At this place I laid in a stock of provisions, live fowls, eggs, rice, and flour, and took on extra men to carry these supplies. Next morning we started up the chasm on the left, and had not gone far before we came upon snow under foot. Our way was through woods of deodar and cheel; hundreds of feet down the river foaming along "with that eternal saddening sound of torrents in the glen beneath," and the snow-tops showing out over the dark green of the foliage thousands of feet over

head. At Aro mist and rain came on, and the artillery of heaven opened in flash and thunder—very grand the livid lightning and the prolonged echoes among the peaks. Aro is a weird little glen, with the remnants of one or two log cabins, under the protection of which the tents were pitched, while portions of the former were used for a bonfire. The Khansamah told me the story—it looked as though it had one—of the deserted village, with its two or three mounds of turf close by. Among the coolies I had observed one much older than the others, but as strong and active as the best of them. His homestead had once been here, where he had lost his four sons one after the other in succession, when he forsook the little glen and migrated to Palgam. I pitied what I conceived were his feelings in that wild place on that wild night, as he laid the roof-tree of his former home upon the burning heap. During the night, I got up, and putting back a flap of the tent, looked out—a weird scene, the smouldering logs, the watery moon over whose face clouds were chasing, the

pale snows, and the quiet of the little glen, broken only by the voices of its many waters. By morning it had quite faired; the road continuing to get more difficult as we advanced, the coolies, poor fellows, slipping about and falling in the soft snow in all directions. They wear grass shoes, which they themselves manufacture from ropes of straw, but these are not adapted for work amongst snow and ice. The shades were beginning to draw around before, all of us being pretty well exhausted, we sighted the halting place—Lidderwat its name—in summer a beautiful little grassy mead, coursed by its streamlet, but now covered with snow some four or five feet deep, avalanches like cascades with the rattle of musketry falling down the bare precipitous ibex cliffs, hundreds of feet sheer, that literally wall it in. The bheestie and I pushed on ahead to discover a spot to encamp. All over it we prowled, and had almost given up the search, anticipating a night on the snow, when we came upon an unusually large deodar, round the roots of which was a snowless circle covered with its fallen

spines, and as dry as a bone. Having joyfully communicated our discovery, the tents were soon fixed beneath its protecting boughs, and a roaring fire of dead timber, of which there were lots about, kindled in as close proximity as was considered safe, in case the wind should veer. Nor was it long before "sudden death" overtook one of the fowls; and, by the time I had bathed my chilled feet in hot water and changed my clothes, an excellent repast was placed upon the table in front of my tent, and within the glow of the cheery fire. When I went to bed it was bright star-shine; thoroughly exhausted, I slept heavily, awaking in the morning to find myself with a violent neuralgic headache at the back of my head, from the wind and rain that had beat upon my tent during the night, from which it was soaking, though it had then become fair. By the time I had dressed, the coolies had gathered round, and from the eager discussion going on between them and my servants, in which I could distinguish the words "*margia*" (die), and "*bot burruf*" (much

snow), I feared that the coolies were for turning back. And so it was. The Khansamah interpreted that there was more snow than they had expected, it would become worse ahead, and a night of exposure without any firewood procurable would kill them. Of course the coolies have no tents, they just sleep anyhow as best they can. This was a sad disappointment, another four marches would take me into the Sind, while, to reach the same point otherwise I must perform a journey of a hundred and fifty or two hundred miles, retracing my steps to Srinagar. Knowing the Cashmere's cupidity, the result of his poverty, poor fellow, I thought I would try the effect of a bribe. The regular pay for the remaining distance was a rupee each, I offered them five. A most animated debate at once arose, in which many orators took part, and no doubt all the pros and cons were carefully balanced. The upshot, however, was that they were very sorry they could not oblige the sab, but that it was not the money they wanted, which they clinched by stating that they could not go

for fifty rupees a head. There was now nothing for it but to sound a retreat, each wearily plodding over the heavy road, through the gloomy day, a throb of pain shooting through my cerebellum with each step. On reaching Palgam again, late in the afternoon, the sun came out, and my hopes once more revived. There was still one chance left, and that was to make the Sind by following up the other branch of the Liddar.

Early next morning, I started with a villager as guide, picked for his activity and local knowledge of the mountains. The servants and coolies were to follow slowly after, so that if we had to turn back we should meet them half way. With a good deal of exertion, we got as far as a place called Tannin, about thirteen miles above Palgam, when the sight that greeted our eyes would have convinced the least experienced that farther progress in that direction was barred. I do not think that I have ever encountered a scene of such awe-inspiring sublimity. The river, a full-bodied current forty feet or more

wide, issued out from beneath a bridge or tunnel of snow, twenty or thirty feet thick, upon the top of which we walked, and spanning the stream for some eighty yards of its course. All around lay the snow, not flaky, but like powdered sugar, on which by the margin of the river were tracks of wild animals that had come to drink, of bear and barrasingh. On one side towered clustering crests that might have been Mont Blancs, Monte Rosas, and Jung Fraus all grouped together; on the other rose perpendicular walls of oxidised rock thousands of feet in height. Here we were within but a few miles, not more than ten, of one of the most famed places in all Cashmere, to which yearly thousands of pilgrimages are made,—the awful cave of Ambernath, where the Mundane egg was hatched, and in whose gloomy recesses Siva resides, in the form of a cube of ice. In its vicinity, is Sheesha Nag, the Leaden Lake, whose congealed bosom never thaws, not even in the midst of summer, perhaps the weirdest lake in all the world, with its glacier streaming

into it, from its overshadowing cone of virgin snow. In being compelled to leave these unseen, another was added to the number of my unrealised aspirations, but one there is no saying that fate may not some day lead my errant footsteps to fulfil. Hence I turned my face to Srinagar again, hastening back as fast as I could. At Eishmakan I once more got into summer and sunshine, the blossoms had almost disappeared, and in the interval vegetation had advanced with rapid strides. How delightful it was to view these scenes of softer beauty again, after being a spectator of the appalling austerities of nature in the region of perpetual snow! Towards the foot of the valley, the Liddar divides into a delta of swift streams, across which I was carried on the shoulders of one of the lusty ferrymen who make a living by thus transporting wayfarers. At picturesque Bijbehara, we, servants and self, got on board a doongah, and after our hardships and exertions, relished to the full the luxurious sloth of being towed down the sluggish river in the

dreamy moonshine. Morning found us on awaking once more opposite to Moonshi Bagh.

To enable me to brace myself for a fresh expedition—the Sind valley *via* Ganderbal, the relaxation of a day or two's listless loitering in Srinagar was requisite. My friends the sporting planters, encumbered with *spolia opima*, splendid heads and magnificent skins, had come in from their nullahs. How different since last we had been here together—the weather bright and genial, and in the poplar avenue green leaves instead of bare twigs. We occupied the same bungalow again, idly navigating the Jhelum during the day, and in the evenings after dinner telling the story of our adventures over our coffee, as we sat outside fronting the river. One of my friends—not the great elephant Shikari—had committed the unpardonable imprudence of shooting at a bear from below. This occurred towards dusk, upon a snow slope, near the top of a mountain, and Bruin—one of the red, carnivorous kind—growling and grunting, came rolling down

on to the top of his assailant, who luckily at that instant lost his footing, and himself rotated off in another direction. Next morning the shikari found poor Baloo dead hard by in a pool of blood—a huge monster.

Travellers in Cashmere are pretty nearly equally divided in their preference for the Liddar or the Sind. For my own part, I think there is no question that the verdict of superiority should be accorded to the Liddar, in respect both of the greater beauty of its lower reaches, and its grander sublimities towards the source. In the Sind, however, it was that I performed the longest and most arduous day's work that I had in Cashmere. wishing to see the head of the valley, and the celebrated Zoji pass, I left my tents and retinue behind at a place called Gagangair, two marches from the top, and set out accompanied by a single coolie to show me the way. It was beautifully bright when we started, but we had not gone a couple of miles when it began to pour. The way was by the side of a roaring torrent in a narrow rocky

gorge; now we were clambering over the stones on a level with its bed, then we were wading through the snows high above, and, worst of all, I had left my Mackintosh behind. Half way I passed through Sonamarg, or Golden Mountain-Mead, the largest of those elevated meadows that are frequent in Cashmere. The snow had barely cleared from off it, but in a short space now it would be pied with yellow crocus flowers, to which it owes its name, and later lively with fugitives from the heat of Srinagar. The view at the head of the valley amply repaid me,—the Zoji La, the passage to Dras, Ladak, Yarkund, and Kashgar, on the great commercial highway to central Asia, a great rift in a snow mountain, with wafts of mist floating over and through the yawning chasm, a broad glacier flowing down beside it, and surrounded by an amphitheatre of perpendicular cliffs of bare rock, beautifully defined with oblique stratifications, the Ambernath ke nullah leading through them to those famous caves which I am again so near without ~~being~~ being able to reach. Here

I was glad to seek a little rest and shelter in a coolie's bothie, built of deodar, all charred and black with smoke inside, where I found a number of Dras coolies, merry little chaps of the true Mongolian type, warming themselves, and baking chupaties upon the embers of wood fires. I too joined in with my frugal fare, a few ship biscuits, and a draught of cool water. The day was Sunday, and as I looked at my watch, I could not help reflecting by what strange fortuity of circumstances I should be here in this wild out-of-the-world spot, hobnobbing with Thibetan coolies, when I ought to have been quietly kneeling in the Temple Church, piously ejaculating, "Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners!" As is always the case, returning upon the same footsteps seemed to double the distance. It was still heavily raining, and night had come on. A mile or two from our destination, when it had become quite dark, I was rejoiced by meeting the bheestie with a lantern, and a couple of coolies. The good Khansamah had had the forethought to send them on to light me back, or

I should have been in considerable difficulty and danger, belated on the verge of a raging torrent, and the lantern had to be used to show us where to place our feet upon the rocks among the pools. When I got in I found dinner waiting for me, and the Khansamah somewhat anxious. Having changed my clothes, soaking through, I tried to make myself as comfortable as I could, but a wet tent is poor consolation, after forty miles of exhausting road, amid incessant down-pour.

To its natural advantages of scenery, Cashmere has in superaddition all the attractions that can be lent by poetry and romance. It is as well the land of Lalla Rookh as the scene of the Villeggiatura of Mogul emperors. What Scott has done for his native country, that, though in a lesser degree, Moore accomplished for a land he never visited. It is only another of the marvels of genius that the Irish poet should have caught and conveyed the very aroma of the scenes he describes. Those alone who have been to Cashmere can realise the full beauty of the poem; and every one who has

will admit with what graces of its own it clothes the prospect. On the banks of the Jhelum, or floating on "the lake of cool Cashmere," the woes of young Azim and Zelica, of Hinda and her Gheber lover, at once acquire a gentler pathos, and confer a softer halo. In my tented wanderings among the vales and mountains of that Peristan, my only companion was the oriental romance of Thomas Moore.

The greatest of the Moguls it was who added Cashmere to the dominions of the house of Timour, and it at once became their holiday retreat from the furnace breath of Agra or of Delhi. With the memory of none of them, however, is it so intimately associated as with that of Jehangeer and his lovely consort Noor Jehan. The story of the loves of that devoted couple is one of the most romantic that history records. It will suggest resemblances to the narrative of David and Bathsheba, but the distinctions are all in favour of the Indian tale. Attached to the court of Akbar in a humble

capacity, were a Persian and his wife, whom circumstances had reduced. A daughter had they, whose beauty even as an infant had saved her life, when abandoned from want on the roadside at Candahar. Upon her, now a maiden in her prime, the eyes of Selim the Crown Prince fell, and at once he became enamoured. The apprehensive mother of the girl betrayed his passion to Abkar, who, dreading a *mésalliance*, had her immediately married to one Shir Afgan Khan, bestowing upon him, to put her out of reach, a *jageer* in Bengal. Time rolled by, but Selim did not place his eyes upon the fair face of her whose beauty had enthralled him at first sight. At length Abkar was gathered to his fathers, and Selim reigned in his stead, as Jehangeer, "the Conqueror of the World." As soon as he was secure upon the throne, he despatched his foster-brother as Viceroy to Bengal, with the commission to obtain for him at all hazards the wife of Shir Afgan. The Viceroy summoned the latter to his presence, and urged

the suit of his imperial master beyond all bounds. The poniard of the outraged husband returned his answer with a death stab, and himself upon the spot was cut to pieces by the guards. The innocent cause of the woe was immediately sent under escort to Agra, where she spurned the suit of the Emperor, whom she regarded as her husband's destroyer. For five long years "the Conqueror of the World"* wooed in vain, but when at last she yielded, her heart accompanied her hand. The Emperor raised her to the throne as his consort, an equality never before heard of. Her image was associated with his own upon the coins of the realm. "Noor Mahal" and "Noor Jehan," "Light of the Palace," and "Light of the World," were the titles by which she was thenceforth dignified. From the first she exerted an authority as beneficent as it was paramount. From his youth up, Jehang  r had been addicted to deeds of cruelty; she assuaged the natural ferocity of his disposition. It is true she failed to overcome his habits of self-indulgence,

but, at all events, she never allowed them to detract from his dignity in public. Inventress, as in India she is accredited with being, of attar of roses, and ever exercising an elevating influence in the domains of taste, her advice was sought and followed in matters of the highest policy of state. On one occasion, towards the end of his reign, when the Emperor was taken prisoner by his rebellious chief commander, Noor Jehan, seated upon an elephant, and armed like Dian with bow and quiver, headed the assault to effect his rescue. Masculine force having failed, she voluntarily shared her lord's captivity, and ultimately, by feminine craft, ever invincible, procured his liberation, and the discomfiture of his captor. For more than twenty years they lived together without a difference to cloud their happiness. When Jehangeer died, she retired into seclusion, and assumed the white raiment of mourning, which she never after discontinued. Nineteen years of chaste viduity she consecrated to his memory and to acts of charity,

and finally was laid to rest in a humbler tomb in the vicinity of the magnificent mausoleum at Shahdara that she had erected over the remains of him whom she had loved so well and mourned so long. To this day, in India, her name is a household word for all that is wifely and admirable in her sex. Of Jehangeer, the best that history relates is that he won and retained the affection of such a woman!

Of all the Moguls, none were such constant visitors to the happy valley as those two, and it was on returning from one of their frequent excursions that at Rajaori, half-way between Srinagar and the plains, the Conqueror of the World expired. In all parts of the vale of Cashmere hermitages and pleasure gardens are to be met, scenes of the recurring and lifelong honeymoons of that happy pair. At various places in the valley, springs gush forth from the rock, not in mere rills but as full-grown streams. The chief of these are Atchibal and Vernag, the latter the fountain head of the Hydaspes. Here,

under the direction of Noor Mahal herself, the waters have been confined in deep tanks, surrounded by alcoved walls, pleasure grounds have been laid out, and summer-houses erected, and here, strolling hand-in-hand, under the same fruit trees, or gazing into the pellucid pools swarming with Himalayan trout, the two lovers spent the jocund hours in dalliance. Not there however, but on the margin of the Dal Lake, must be sought the most famous of their haunts—that lake whose limpid bosom buoys its floating gardens, freighted with growths of cucumber and melon, and seems to buoy its “*Sona Lank*” and “*Rupa Lank*,” its “Golden Isle” and “Silver Isle.” By its edge is Naseeb Bagh, a wide stretch of smoothest turf, with nave-like avenues of the stately oriental plane. There is a Cashmere saying that the chunar is king of the trees of the forest, and the poplar his prime minister. Nowhere, beautiful objects as they are throughout the valley, of giant bole, umbrageous bough, and bosky leafage, are they more

regal in appearance than in the Naseeb Bagh ever casting down their cooling shadows, as once they flung them at the feet of Jehangeer and Noor Jehan. The opposite margin of the lake is literally lined with pleasure gardens, most renowned of which is Shalimar, with its flowers and groves of fruit trees, its reservoirs and fountains, its terraces rising above terraces, its marble baradari's and pavilions, and its incomparable prospect over the placid lake to the mural snows beyond. But "magnificent Shalimar" is known to all, whether they have been to the Eden of earth or not; for on the "Feast of Roses" was not that the scene of the love quarrel and reconciliation of Selim and "the Light of the Harem," and within its gorgeous saloons were not the nuptials celebrated, not of Aliris the monarch, but of Feramorz, the minstrel, with the Lady of the "Tulip Cheek?" As like Jehangeer himself before they made it up,

"Joyless and alone,
And weary, as the bird of Thrace,
Whose pinion knows no resting place."

I wandered among the glades of the garden, through which no merry laugh or gladsome carol rang out to break the silence, and upon which is settling down the melancholy of slow decay, I confess I could not restrain the reflection how much the companionship of a Noor Jehan must have enhanced the enjoyment of scenes like these. The trees were a mass of blossom of white and purple, but the ripened fruit was for "other lips."

Srinagar was now rapidly filling with English visitors. What a change it exhibited since we had entered it first. Then it was like mid-winter, not a leaf upon the boughs, not a stranger in the place. Now it is bright and warm as in the height of summer, the branches covered with green foliage, and some two or three hundred English visitors in the valley. The Moonshi Bagh and the Harri Singh Bagh present quite animated scenes. Upon the sward, among the trees of the orchards, a canvas town has been pitched; tats with their attendant syces are picketed close by, bright-winged ayahs with infantile charges flit about like discordant

meenass; married and single of both sexes abound, and polo, badminton, and lawn tennis are the order of the afternoons. Verily Srinagar is a Paradise on half-pay—no rents, no rates and taxes, where you can have a first-class suit of clothes made to your fit for under a pound, and where you can live like a king for a florin per diem. No wonder that it is extensively patronised by those who wish to economise during the hot weather for the gaieties of the cold, or desire to enjoy love in a tent without the risk of its flying out at the window. After the hardships of campaigning, inducements were not wanting to provoke me to linger amid these relaxations, but a voice ever urged me that I had yet far to go, and no time for tarrying. My friends the coffee planters had not been able to wait for me, and were already steaming towards Calcutta, through the burning plains, now about their hottest, before the breaking of the monsoon. The prospect was not encouraging to have to traverse the whole length of the land, at a time when old Indians would have

considered it tempting Providence to travel in the day time twenty miles by rail. The thermometer, in spite of kuss-kuss tatties, and punkahs in the carriages, will be 110, and the chances of heat-apoplexy not remote, but, thanks to the considerate attention of the authorities, the trains carry coffins, and shells are waiting at the principal stations in case of accidents.

Before taking leave of Srinagar, I called upon the Chief-Justice of Cashmere, to whom I had a letter of introduction—Baboo Nilamber, a dignified Bengali, with an admirable command of Empress's English, and of such versatility that he combines with his judicial functions those of Minister of Sericulture. Next day, as I was sitting at the door of my tent, I observed a procession approaching; first came a man leading two sheep, then followed others bearing platters heaped with vegetables, fruits, rice, flower, butter, and such products of husbandry. Advancing, they salaamed me, and deposited their burdens at my feet with the salaams of the Chief-Justice. A gift of this

sort, when made by an inferior to a superior, is called a *nuzzer*, but in a case like mine, I do not know the word that would properly be used. Previously the Chief-Justice had visited me himself, but this mode of returning a call struck me as very odd, and much like what would have happened had I left my pasteboard upon one of the Hebrew patriarchs amongst his flocks and herds.

At the last bungalow in the valley, with the pass of the Pir Panjal 11,500 feet looming above, I came up with the young surgeon of a lancer regiment at Sealcote, returning laden with trophies of the chase. We joined messes at supper, his contribution being a roast sirloin of bear, of which the flesh is very dark in colour and coarse grained, and the flavour rather bitter. A long, stiff pull we found it to the beginning of the pass, where there is an old Mogul rest-house, called the Alia-bad Serai—a gloomy spot, with nothing but snow and the wilds of Nature all around. It was bitterly cold, and fires kindled on the capacious hearths of the stone-floored rooms, or rather dun-

geons, of the old serai barely kept us warm. Just outside the gateway, a tumulus marks the grave of an unhappy physician, who died of cholera, and was buried here, on his way back from Srinagar. The shade of this luckless leech, who failed to cure himself, seemed to spread a wet blanket over the scene, and it was with an unexpressed feeling of relief that both of us quitted the place in the morning, as we had no desire that our bones should be company for those of the unfortunate disciple of Galen and Hippocrates, left in loneliness in that out-of-the-way spot. The snow was about four feet deep, the season being unusually backward, as the winter had been exceptionally severe. The pass itself is a narrow valley, about four miles in length, with peaks on either side rising above it. At the further end, where at an old guard-tower we halted to recruit for the steep descent, a magnificent prospect burst upon our delighted view. At our feet, like tidal rollers advancing on snowy cliffs, lay transverse ranges of purple hills in diminish-

ing series, till the last merged in the golden glamour of the far-off Punjabi plain, upon which the naked eye can discern, a hundred and thirty miles distant, the minars of Lahore. That night we rested at Baramgalla, pretty well knocked up; for nothing tries the knees of a mountaineer's steadfastness like a stiff descent. When first I had fallen in with my companion of the lancet and the lance, he asked me what I had been doing in Cashmere, and, on my replying only making a walking-tour, evidently regarded me with the disdainful pity with which the great Shikari ever contemplates a mere pedestrian, as much as to say that I had need put my best foot foremost, if I wished to keep up with him. At Aliabad Serai I had got in at least an hour in advance, he was considerably behind me at Baramgalla, and next morning, when I got up early to ascend the Rutten Pir, the first and largest of these cross ranges, and second only to the Pir itself, young Medico was still in bed. He told me he had heard overnight that there was

some good shooting to be had in the neighbourhood, and so I left him to stalk mythical markhor on an imaginary mount.

On my way out I often found myself asking, "Isn't the scenery even more lovely than that of Cashmere itself?" The Dhoons were smaller and softer, the mountains more crag like, crowned by the hill forts of bygone rajahs, reminding one of Rhineland, and then, ever as I looked behind, uprose the snowy foreheads of the Pir Panjal, like an alignement of the Old Guard, keeping watch and ward over the treasure-beauty of divine Cashmere. I had come along as it were without drawing bridle, but the beauty of Rajaori compelled me to halt a day. I arrived at the resting place late in the evening,—in an orchard garden, two little oriental pavilions of alcoved colonnades and vaulted chambers, overhanging a broad stream murmuring below, with the moon glistening on its waters and on the white towers and temples of the ancient little rajah-city, perched on the high bank opposite. I passed the day in strolling

through the quaint picturesque streets of the townlet, and my khansamah regaled me with an excellent stew of fruit from the orchard, free to all visitors. The heat was now becoming fearful. The morning march, starting before sunrise, we walked, a swim in the deep pools of the Tawi, the noble river that waters the country through which our road lay, doing something to tone us up to the endurance required, but, towards the end of those tramps, on more than one occasion, I had forebodings of sunstroke, and got in half obfuscated with the heat. The rides on mule-back were delicious, in the cool of the evening, by moonlight, through groves fragrant with the breath of the wild stephanotus, and melodious with the note of the cuckoo and the cooing of the dove. At Bhimber, the first village on the sun-scorched plains, I am indeed fallen low. In a room, with the thermometer at 100, I am lying on my back on a truckle bed, while a Punjab urchin fans me. And but five days ago, I was amongst the frost and ice of the Pir Panjal! My

two servants on mules and myself on a pony, we started at sundown to do the three stages, or twenty-eight miles, to Goojrat on the line of rail again. I had not gone a couple of miles, before I found that the high peaked native saddle was hurting me so much that if I continued in it to the journey's end, I should never be likely either to ride or walk again. I accordingly dismounted, and removing the saddle, left it by the road-side. The worst enemy of that old horse could not accuse it of having no backbone. It was the most vertebrate quadruped I think I ever met, so, finding the last state of that animal worse than the first, I turned its head homewards, and, giving it a cut across the quarters, sent it about its business. There was nothing for it now but to pull myself together for a twenty-five mile walk along the dusty road, through the stilly Punjab night, at the end of May. A low embankment above the desert sandy plain glooming all around, it ran in a direct line with, an occasional weird tree by the side faintly moaning, and

at regular intervals white Government milestones. The night was hotter than the day, not a breath of air stirred; as I continued the fine dust got down my throat, the perspiration hailed over me, I felt all the agonies of burning thirst, and with each milestone the distance between them seemed to increase in geometrical progression. When at last I came to a road-side well, it appeared a deliverance. What looked like a bundle of dirty clothes was lying at the mouth. I poked it up, and found either a watchman or the well-keeper, who brought up a bucket of tepid water, which I eagerly gulped down without being much refreshed, giving him some pice in return. In the middle of the night I reached the half-way house, the dak bungalow of Dowlatnugger, where I at once sucked six raw eggs, drank three bottles of Belatee pani, *i.e.*, soda water, and throwing myself down on a charpoy slept soundly for an hour. Then recommenced the monotonous wearisome trudge trudge through heat, dust, and breathless stillness. About four on a Sunday morning,

with inexpressible thankfulness, I arrived at Goojrat, where, far too exhausted to take off my boots or clothes, or allow them to be removed, I flung myself on a charpoy, and placing a rug over my shoulders fell fast asleep, till long after the good people of Goojrat had begun morning service in their little church. This dak bungalow is the very best I have had experience of in all India. Its tubs are especially excellent, almost big enough to swim in. After I had bathed in one of them, and poured endless gurras of cool water over my head, I felt sufficiently refreshed to do justice to the tea and capital curries the admirable chef had provided for my breakfast. In the bookcase I discovered a copy of Heber's charming journals of his travels in India, with which, my feet upon a chair, à l'Américaine, some hours were most delightfully whiled away. I was to leave for the south by the night train. Then I called in the one of my servants whom I had taken from Murree, and who was to return there, and when, after

paying him off, he salaamed me, and bade me farewell, I felt, and could see he did also, that peculiar sadness that attends the last of anything associated with pleasure and beauty never likely to recur.

But I cannot altogether pass away from that lovely land without, however inadequately, attempting to discharge the debt I owe to the people of those mountains and valleys, amongst which I have been wandering so long. I mean a protest against the existing order of things in Cashmere. Other travellers have felt the same obligation, and have performed it with far more ability than I can command, but with small avail. It may well then be asked where their efforts have been in vain, what good can I hope to do? But if every voice, however feeble, be added to the general chorus of complaint, it will swell in volume, till its claim to attention can no longer be disregarded. The story of Cashmere needs only to be known in England for justice to be done.

After the crowning victory of Sobraon, which laid the Sikh Sirdars at our feet, a treaty was, on the 9th of March 1846, concluded at Lahore, by which, in lieu of portion of the pecuniary indemnification demanded for the expenses of the war, the Durbar ceded, amongst other territory, Cashmere to the British Government. Cashmere had belonged to the Sikhs only since 1819, when it passed into the hands of Runjit Singh as the result of the battle of Jutipur, previously having for five centuries been ruled over by a long succession of Mahomedan sovereigns, the first of whom, Shah Mir, assumed the name Shumsudin, which signifies Sun of the Faith. Since his days up to the present time, the vast majority of the people, with the exception of the Pundits, a small but dominant class, one may say the entire population, has continued Mussulman in belief. On the 15th of March 1846, at Umritsur, Rajah Gulab Singh was invested by the British Government with the title of Maharajah, for which he expressed his gratitude with folded

hands, avowing himself to be its "Gold-bought Slave." On the day after, at the same place, a treaty was concluded between the same parties, article third of which is as follows:—

"In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heirs" (*i.e.*, of Cashmere with other territory "for ever in independent possession"), "by the provisions of the foregoing articles, Maharajah Gulab Singh will pay to the British Government the sum of seventy-five lacs of rupees (*nanuk sháhee*), to be paid on the ratification of this treaty, and twenty-five lacs on or before the 1st October of the current year A.D. 1846."

In a subsequent article, he acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government, and engages, in token thereof, to present to it annually one horse, twelve shawl-goats, and three pairs of Cashmere shawls. On Gulab Singh attempting to take possession of his new dominions thus acquired, he was successfully resisted by the Governor of Cashmere, Sheik Imam Ooddeen, and his imposition required to be effected by a threat

from the British Government of coercion by force of arms.

It is but natural to ask who was this Gulab Singh, Rose Lion, as the words import. He appears originally to have been a dependent of one of the old Rajahs of Jumoo, with whom he fell out, going over to his enemy the neighbouring Rajah of Kishtawar. Him in turn he ultimately duped into his power by forgery, and procured to be poisoned. The attention of Runjit Singh had been attracted to him while a running footman in his service. Discerning a fitting tool, no doubt, Runjit placed him in command of an expedition against the Rajah of Jumoo, and, on its success, conferred upon him in jagheer or fief the lands and title of his old master. This sufficiently stamps the man, but the whole course of his life was a career of unmitigated duplicity and perfidy, actuated by avarice, and crowned by atrocity. Such was the character of him to whose tender mercies, for blood money, we handed over "for ever in independent possession" a

reluctant people, a people, moreover, who had once besought our intervention, and thrown themselves upon our protection ; together with a country which we had acquired by right of conquest, and, will it be believed, without a single stipulation for good governance within the four corners of the treaty ! It is melancholy to find the name of Henry Lawrence, whose self-written epitaph I had read upon his tomb at Lucknow, to such a production. The shame of the proceeding has long, if not from the first, been felt, and it has been attempted to urge in extenuation that at the time we were in a critical position, and obliged to temporise (temporise after Sobraon !) as well as pecuniarily "hard up"—pleas that to me seem only to bring out the inherent baseness and venality of the whole negotiation. An eloquent and indignant writer, who exposed "Cashmere misgovernment," denounces the transaction as without a parallel in history, except the betrayal of Christ for thirty pieces of silver. I will not go quite so far, but this I will say, that I know of none of equal infamy save only, not

the partition of Poland, but another that unhappily Anglo-Indian history also supplies, the sale by Warren Hastings to Sujah Dowlah, a congener of Gulab Singh, of the sword of England to destroy the liberties of the people of Rohilcund.

As was but to be expected, the Government but too well accorded with the personal character of the ruler. From the first, the people were ground down and oppressed in every conceivable way, till the country was pillaged, and the lives of its inhabitants became a burden to them. To give but one example. The taxation had been levied in rupees. Gulab Singh substituted a rupee of higher value, but still the same number of rupees was exacted. The townspeople could procure food only from the Government storehouses, but they got no more for the new currency than formerly they got for the old.

The present ruler is Rambeer Singh, son of the late Maharajah. In character he gets credit for being good-natured and well-intentioned, but his Government is little, if any, less oppressive than

that of his predecessor, so that it is a question whether a people suffers more under the active cruelty of a ruthless tyrant, or under the good-humoured indifference of a ruler who is perfectly satisfied so long as taxation raises sufficient to minister to personal gratification.

Another writer, who also knew the country well, graphically states "that slavery in every sense of the term exists in Cashmere, no man having anything of his own, not even his soul, and the care of it; everything, the land, the water, the food, and the refuse, the weeds, being the Rajah's. As will be seen, these words describe the situation with literal accuracy.

The country is cultivated almost entirely by small zemindars, corresponding very much to our extinct yeomen, or peasant proprietors, being the coolies of whom I have spoken. In the rural districts the chief source of taxation is, of course, the produce of the land. Two-thirds of it are taken in kind by the Maharajah, while in addition a money tax is levied upon the re-

mainder. Besides, there are a *russudart* or house-tax, a fruit tax, amounting to three-fourths of the produce, an animal tax in kind, of puttoo or homespun, so much is set apart for the Maharajah, the same with ghee, and two-thirds are his portion of the honey. Of tax-gatherers there are nearly as many grades as there are taxes, all the lower sorts being entitled to *russud*, a daily allowance of food and fuel. After all the taxes have been levied, and the wants of the gatherers satisfied, including, of course, the amount of their private extortions, so invariable and irrepressible a practice of tax-collectors in the East, it is difficult to perceive how sufficient, how anything, indeed, can be left to keep the cultivators' and their families' body and soul together. Nor is the condition of the urban population better, in some respects it is even more deplorable. The Government share of the land produce is stored in *kotas*, or official warehouses, upon the supplies in which the townspeople are wholly dependent for food, as it is manifest that the country people can have no surplus to sell in the way of provisions. At one

time, these Government storehouses were made the means of exercising the grossest fraud and oppression. Short weight was given, only a limited quantity was allowed to be purchased at a time, and, to raise prices, they were periodically kept closed, whereby they aggravated, if they did not produce, the famines that devastated Cashmere. During one of these famines the people were not allowed to sustain themselves upon the plentiful riches of their waters, because a Pundit had given out that the soul, forsooth, of Gulab Singh had transmigrated into the body of a fish ! But the plight of the wretched shawl-bafs, the workers of shawls, is perhaps the worst. The manufacturer pays an annual capitation tax upon his employés. The occupation, from its confinement, is both peculiarly irksome and injurious to health, but however he may sigh for fresh air and country, however he may find his strength ebbing away, the shawl-baf may not relinquish his calling without finding a substitute, for that would mean loss of poll-tax to the Maharajah. The eloquent writer to whom I have already referred—Robert

Thorp,—generously moved by their wrongs and miseries, exclaims,

“Those gaily coloured threads of wool are not the only ones which these looms weave to their completion. Threads of life more costly than those of the softest pushim, whose price will be demanded by Heaven yet, are spun out there on the loom of sickness and suffering.”

But I was wrong, there are those whose fate is even more pitiable than that of the shawl-baf, wretched as that is. Among Cashmere villagers certain classes, impelled by the necessities of want, sell their female children into prostitution. These classes are scorned and shunned by all their neighbours; but do not let *us* look down upon them, for did not we, the British nation, sell a whole people into a worse than prostitution? In the proceeds of this unholy traffic the Maharajah has a chief share. No child may be sold without an expensive licence from him, which becomes a chain to bind her to her prison-house, as she can never hope to pay it off. In the wages of her

shame he is also a partaker, and, not so long ago, not one of these unhappy creatures might give up the life she was living, and become an honest woman, on account of the loss that it would entail to the exchequer of the Maharajah. If the condition of the shawl-baf and the nautch girl be not slavery, and slavery under British protection, I know not what is !

Of the revenue so raised little or none is expended to promote the welfare of the people from whom it is levied. The sanitary condition of the capital is such that it is periodically devastated by disease, and, generally speaking, Cashmere may be pronounced a country destitute of roads, that first care of a beneficent and enlightened ruler. Instead of being devoted to works of public utility, the wealth of the people is taken out of the country to Jamoo, and there lavished in maintaining the burlesque royalties of its mimic court. The worst, moreover, is that the Maharajah will neither improve the country himself, nor permit others to better it. Not a bigah of land is pur-

chasable, not a house may be erected in Cashmere by a British subject. Leave was refused to build a hotel in Srinagar. Herein is the explanation of the much-vaunted munificence of the Maharajah with regard to those gratuitous bungalows, which after all are little better than dog-kennels. For my part I had rather not be compelled to become the guest of Rumber Singh. Till recently no traveller might visit Cashmere without the permit of the Maharajah, nor was he allowed to winter in the valley; and even now he must enter by prescribed routes, making a detour to avoid coming between the wind and the nobility of the son of Gulab Singh. Such is the attitude of cringing sycophancy assumed by the British Indian Government towards the son of the man who styled himself our "Gold-bought Slave," and towards its tributary of shawls and goats!

One of the most galling incidents of Cashmere misgovernment is that it is exercised by a small minority of one creed over a vast majority of another and conflicting religion. Only those who

have been to India, and have witnessed the antagonism that exists between Hindoo and Islamite (and in Cashmere, differing in that respect from India, the followers of the Prophet are commonly Sunis, the straitest sect of Mahomedans), can appreciate the full significance of the fact, or realise the attitude of "the mild Hindoo" when forming one of a dominant minority. All the officials of every class are taken from the smaller number, and, in any dispute arising between Mussulman and Hindoo, it is stated to be impossible for the former to obtain justice. Till recently, out of deference to the prejudices of the minority, it was a capital offence throughout Cashmere to kill a cow, and even at present the penalty is imprisonment for life, accompanied by corporal punishment, involving not only the actual delinquent, but also the whole of his family, and this because Sikh tenderness begins and ends with the sacred cow.

I do not profess to have supplied a complete catalogue of Cashmere grievances, some I have not noticed—among them, one of the worst perhaps,

“the transport of supplies for troops,” for which the Cashmere yeomen are impressed from their homes, often miserably perishing from hunger among the snows of the high mountain passes with loads of food upon their backs,—and many, no doubt, I am unacquainted with. Still, however, it will be thought that I have specified sufficient to make out the intolerable burden of wrong which is laid upon this people.

Some persons have professed to find a palliation, if not an apology, for the existing state of things in traducing the inhabitants of Cashmere, who afford the best example I know of the truth of the homely saying about giving a dog a bad name. The folklore of his not too friendly neighbours has summed up his character in such proverbs, as “Do not admit a Cashmeri to your friendship, or you will hang a hatchet over your door,” and, “If you meet a snake do not put it to death, but do not spare a Cashmeri.” He has also been pronounced “supple, intriguing, false.” For my part, I have never met with a more

inoffensive, industrious, and honest people. A touching custom illustrating their kindliness is that the sick and the aged who have no one to look after them are adopted as a common charge by the community. Rather to me it is wonderful that they should so long have been the victims of oppression and misrule, and should yet have contracted so few of the vices which these engender. Systematic ill-treatment seems to have injuriously affected them only in one particular, that of personal courage. Of fine physique, of great strength, and capable of sustained endurance, they are timorous and spiritless against outrage, submissive to every indignity or misuse that any Punjab sepoy or Dogra Latial in the service of the Maharajah may choose to inflict upon them. With me this circumstance speaks more eloquently than any other of the nature of the treatment to which they have been habituated since the Sikh first acquired dominion in Cashmere. The country is becoming depopulated, in all parts of it are the remains of former

villages and the vestiges of bygone prosperity, the squalor of the existing habitations witnessing to abject penury. The events of the recent famine afford a corroborative commentary to these statements. Such, we read, was the amount of speculation and corruption which the British officers, who were sent to assist in alleviating the distress, encountered at the hands of the local officials, that they retired thwarted and disheartened, while it needed the strongest pressure brought to bear by the Supreme Government to induce the Maharajah to betray the amount of interest involved in repairing to the capital of his starving subjects. Further, a story, too ghastly for credence, has found its way as far as this country, that the local officials, either to remove the appearance of distress, or from some other motive, have deported boatloads of human beings in the dead of night, and drowned them like brute beasts in the dark waters of the Woolar Lake. Feelings of a common humanity impel one to hope that even Dogra hard-heartedness would stop short of atrocity such

as that. Yet it is authentic that in former famines the passes out of Cashmere were guarded, and fugitives to the plains of India, where there was plenty, driven back to starvation and death. A charge like this demands instant and searching examination, on behalf of the accused if unfounded, of the victims if true. If true, surely then, even in the sight of the callous indifference of the British Indian Government to the fate of "Our Neglected Ward," the measure of Dogra guiltiness will at length be full, and the cup of Dogra iniquity running over.

There is but one remedy for all these grievances, and but one reparation for the wrongs we have been the means of inflicting upon the people of Cashmere, and that is resumption. There cannot be a doubt that, if the popular wish could find expression in a plebiscite, the country, with the exception of the Pundits, by whom it is pillaged, and the Sepoys, by whom it is dragooned, would declare in favour of such a measure. But one thing stands in the way, and that is the treaty,

and the breach of faith that its abrogation would seem to involve. The question then becomes one of the validity of the treaty. The right of conquest, no doubt, gave us a title to Cashmere, but it conferred no authority to sell it to a third party, without having consulted the inhabitants as to such their disposal. The contract was emphatically an immoral one, and therefore *ab initio* void. In addition, although the treaty is lamentably silent upon the subject, the good government of the people must be taken to be an implied condition of the treaty—a condition which has not only been broken, but never even been pretended to have been observed.

When we sold Cashmere into bondage, we committed an error as well as a crime. It happens to be the only portion of India of any extent adapted to British colonisation. While introducing capital into it and developing its resources to the benefit of its inhabitants—here, in unimpaired vigour, an English race might have increased and multiplied, and Cashmere become “the best bower”

to anchor to England's destinies those of her vast dependency. But for these considerations of self-advantage there is no longer room. The only one admissible is the wellbeing of the country, and how most effectually to repair the wrong we perpetrated upon its people, thereby removing the reproach and responsibility now resting on ourselves. If the filthy lucre for which their liberties were bartered away has ever been paid, let it be refunded, and land and people redeemed from the misrule and oppression that have converted the Earthly Paradise into an Earthly Hell, and so Cashmere again become, in deed and in fact, what once it was, but now can be called only in bitter mockery, "The Happy Valley."

CHAPTER XII.

THE BENIGHTED PRESIDENCY.

WHY Madras should be called "The Benighted Presidency" I am at a loss to understand. If the epithet be meant as a term of reproach, I am sure it is undeserved. In no part of India is administration more efficiently conducted. When I was at Fort St. George, the weather was at its fiercest heat, and epidemics were raging in the Black Town, yet Governor and Staff were at their post working double tides in unsparing efforts to stay the advances of famine, while on the serene summits of Simla, supreme authorities were regaling themselves upon pâté de foie gras, and sipping curaçoa, or inditing minutes of economical platitudes on the limits of Government relief. Nowhere throughout the dependency is British rule more popular, or, rather, more patiently acquiesced

in, and nowhere were we more staunchly supported during the Mutiny than in the Benighted Presidency. Benighted in a favourable sense it certainly is. Here yet linger the good old traditions of Anglo-Indian hospitality that elsewhere are becoming extinct. At mess you even meet—no better companion anywhere to be found—the old-fashioned Indian officer, probably a major of Fusileers, proud of his native corps, and who looks on India as in some sort still his home. Had I, as belonging to either of the services, to settle in India, “The Benighted” would unquestionably be the Presidency of my choice.

Seen from the Bay of Bengal, Madraspattanam presents itself as an esplanade dazzling white of godowns, church spires, and the angles of a fort, fronting the glistening sea, on a scarcely perceptible bight in the long stretch of low sandy coast. Steamers and ships are riding at anchor in the open roadstead. Catamarans, mere submerged logs in appearance, perilously exposing their amphibious occupants to the abounding sharks, are float-

ing about fishing. Clouds of sparkling spray rise into the air, as the curling breakers discharge themselves in surf upon the shore. Landing is effected, with more or less of difficulty, in the celebrated Massoulah boat, a deep craft of high freeboard, constructed of planks loosely bound together by strands of coir so as to give to the bumping on the beach, as the breaker recedes upon whose crest it has ridden in, amid the loud ululations and the frantic exertions of its crew.

Almost the first step ashore suffices to acquaint you that you have set foot in an earlier Anglo-India—one associated with the first beginnings of British Empire in the East, with struggles with the French for supremacy and with native powers for existence, with the names of Clive and Warren Hastings, of Dupleix and Labourdonnais, of Hyder Ali and Tippoo Sultan. An old-fashioned old-world serenity pervades the streets; at the corners you almost expect to encounter warriors in pig-tails and Hessian boots; and after Calcutta and Bombay it is just as though from the noise and

bustle of the Strand or Piccadilly one had emerged amongst the pensioners of Greenwich or of Chelsea.

In the way of sights there is but little to detain the visitor. There is Fort St. George itself, with the cool sea breeze blowing over its battlements, one of those fortifications much less impregnable against assault than picturesque to the eye, with its bastions and curtains, its ravelins and glacis. Across the drawbridge, conspicuous in the centre of an open space, and amidst captured ordnance curiously fashioned in bronze, stands a marble statue of Lord Cornwallis, a homely old gentleman in bag-knot and smalls, with owl-face and shaven chops. Close by is a heavy eighteenth-century chapel, the interior walls of which are paved with monumental tablets, many of them erected by order of the Chairman and Directors of H.E.I.C. to commemorate eminent public services, and testifying what a kind and appreciative master at anyrate was old Gompany Sab. Of greatest interest, of course, is "Writer's Buildings," where, as has so often been told, "Bob

Clive," an idle apprentice, twice snapped a pistol at his own head—a pistol that was not to prove fatal, till his life-work had been accomplished and an empire founded. At some distance in another direction is Government House, very different from its opulent and otiose sister at Calcutta, a flimsy pack-of-cards structure with quantities of green jalousies, but it stands in a pretty English-like park with browsing deer, and within sound of the lapping of the sea. Adjoining is "The Banqueting Hall," a cumbrous white-plaster barn with huge pediments filled in with classic armour, casques, and sheaves of spears. Some very indifferent paintings decorate its walls, portraits of Madras notables, chief among them the victor of Wandewash and Pollilore. But, towards the end of the day, after a fatiguing tour of inspection, the Madras spectacle from which the weary voyager can extract the most unqualified satisfaction is its noble club, where a revivifying plunge in the cool depths of its luxurious swimming bath renders him appreciative of the subse-

quent glass of iced hock and plát of chingree curry in its spacious dining-hall.

After the exhaustion produced by my long journey from Goojrat by rail in the height of the hot season, and by sight-seeing in Madras, a flying excursion to the sanitarium of the Blue Mountains appeared needful to reinvigorate one for visiting some of the more famous architectural monuments of Southern India. A twisting, winding lake, artificial, but with an art so artistically concealed as to look like nature's self, and held in the hollow of bare, breezy hills whose slopes are sprinkled with embowered bungalows and rustic cottages—such is Ootacamund, or “Ooty” as it is more fondly and familiarly called. With its “sweet half-English Neilgherry air,” and its un-English profusion of English flowers—hedges of roses and of fuchsias, banks of dahlias,—dense masses of variegated colour,—and great clumps of heliotrope scattering scent around, it forms one of the most delightful health-resorts in the whole of India. Here I passed a day or two most agree-

ably. Amongst other things, we rode to the top of Dodabetta, "the Great Mount," nearly nine thousand feet in height, and the most elevated point in Southern India, the summit, where it was blowy and shiveringly cold, commanding a most extensive view from the table-land of Mysore to the plain of the Carnatic.

On the way we passed through the Government cinchona gardens—a large orchard of small trees or big bushes. The stem is enveloped with moss to increase the production of bark, which is removed in alternate vertical strips, two years being taken to reproduce the cortex on the denuded parts. The outlay is considerable, and the price liable to great fluctuations, but after all deductions Government is said to draw a very handsome net revenue from its cultivation of the raw material of sulphate of quinia, and one that it may well regard with more complacency than that derived from the culture of the poppy.

Another interest in the Neilgherries are the Todas, a peculiar people dwelling in small villages

or kraals, called munds, whence Ootacamund. They are a well formed, comely, good-natured-looking tribe, with a dash of gipsy in appearance. For a long time they were supposed to be a surviving remnant of the aboriginal Kôls, who had taken refuge in the hills, but philology has rather thrown a doubt upon that conjecture, by resolving their dialect into a corruption of Canarese. They lead a pastoral life, exchanging ghee from the milk of their much-worshipped buffalos for grain with the Burghers. The latter, an arable people, paying tribute to the Todas as lords of the soil, are also descendants of immigrants from the plains, and their dialect likewise derived from the language of Canara. The Todas have a number of curious usages, the motives of the most of which are now completely lost, and whose peculiarities, as in the case of all primitive peoples, are most marked in reference to the rites connected with marriage and burial. The whole sept is computed not to exceed seven or eight hundred in number, a paucity hardly to be wondered at, con-

sidering that polyandry and female infanticide till recently flourished among them, if that term be applicable to such infructuous institutions. The Todas have been supposed to be dying out, but it has been clearly shown that, as is almost universal, their increase more than keeps pace with the increase of their means of sustenance, so that generations must elapse before, yielding to civilisation, the Toda, with his customs, his traditions, and his buffalos, takes the final leap from Makurti's Peak, fronting the western sun, to Amnôr—seat of the Toda's heaven.

Ever since I had entered the Presidency, my footsteps seemed to have been dogged by the spectre of famine. On landing at Madras, I had found the beach barricaded by a rampart of rice-bags, at least a mile in length, and twelve feet high. In passing through Salem and Coimbatore, I observed, near all the railway stations at which we stopped, men, women, and children engaged in breaking stones into road metal, of which there stretched great piles like potato-pits. They all

seemed well nourished, but the delicate appearance of many of the women, obviously unused to manual labour, told how far and how sharply want had penetrated the ranks of native social life. On my way up the ghaut, sufferers met me whose aspect only too well betokened the extremity of starvation. Living skeletons, covered with loose folds of dark parchment, large-jointed, hollow-eyed, crawled out of the dense jungle, and with the strange apathy of the Hindoo (how different from the almost frantic frenzy of the ravenous hordes who beset me on the road to Peking, during the China famine), but with a mute appeal that was heart-rending, merely placed their bony hands together in supplication, and then crawled back into the bush again to die. The first few I gave something to, but after all any little doles I could afford meant only prolongation of the agony. These famines are the most serious problems with which the Indian Government will be called upon to deal, likely, as they are, to recur in the future, and with increasing severity on

each reappearance. A population that esteems early marriage and unrestricted propagation of species as religious observances must ever continue to encroach on the utmost limits of subsistence, till much less than a failure, a mere deficiency of crops becomes adequate to produce all the miseries and dangers of famine. The very virtues of our rule are aggravations of the evil. Under native sway, perpetual warfare and chronic lawlessness were powerful in counteracting the tendency to indefinite increase. Infanticide also, although Hume and Malthus make it out to be favourable to population, can only be such, regarded as an abstract institution, and, when systematically carried into practical effect, as it was in India, could not fail to form a most potent depopulator. We have given the country the blessings of peace, order, and security to life and property, but we have done away with those checks that may have been the outcome of necessity. It may be a question whether famines should not be considered as safety-valves, as efforts made by nature to relieve her-

self of surplusage, as needful though "terrible correctives of the redundancy of mankind," and whether organised Government intervention is not but placing a premium upon improvidence, a futile conflict with the laws of nature, and a putting off the evil for a greater cataclysm, when it can no longer be deferred. That sounds cynical certainly, but the important point is whether it be not correct. I am not expressing my own views. A mere observer of external features, I have none. Opinions — self-confident ones — I leave to those holiday-roving Parliamentaries, who, in the course of a rapid transit, hang their heads out of the windows of a railway-carriage, and, during the revolution of a wheel, settle (to their own satisfaction) all the vexed social and political problems of a country, to which men of vastly greater abilities have brought the devotion of a life-time to find them insoluble.

South of the Vindhya chain of mountains, India assumes the appearance of an almost totally different country. In physical configuration, there

are the same vast surfaces of plain, but more frequently intersected by ranges, while occasional cones of volcanic origin crop up in isolation. The vegetation, though not so greenly vivid as that of Bengal, is more characteristically tropical, cactus and prickly pear more abounding, and the jack-tree with its tumorous fruit now first appearing. The architecture is of another order—temples are here called Pagodas, as though to indicate an evidently Turanian element in their style. The features of the inhabitants are of another mould, and their complexions of a darker hue. From the moment of entering the Presidency, the traveller discovers that he must discard as useless that modicum of corrupt Hindostanee that elsewhere throughout the country has proved so invaluable an acquisition. Of old this portion of India was known by the Sanskrit name of Dravida, and Dravidian has now supplanted Tamilian as a generic term for the peoples and languages of Southern India. Ethnologically and philologically, the genesis of the Dravidian race and tongues has been a matter

of vast dispute, some authorities holding both to be entirely distinct from those of Northern India, and going so far as to find their cognates in the aborigines of Australia or of Africa, while others maintain that speech and race are derivatives from Sanskrit, and the people of whose colloquial languages Sanskrit was the literary dialect. The better opinion now appears to be that the Dravidian language-family is a member of the Scythian group of tongues, and, on the ground of certain Indo-European affinities of speech, that the Dravidians were the immediate præ-Aryan swarm from the great hive of humanity, wherever in the wilds of Central Asia that marvellous apiary may have been located.

Of Dravida the most interesting cities perhaps are Tanjore, Madura, and Trichinopoly. Tanjore, the ancient capital of the Cholas, with the grandest temple of Southern India, its Vimana rising in sixteen étages to the height of two hundred feet, and capped by a monolith of granite eighty tons in weight; and Madura, the seat of the Pandyan

kings, with the stupendous architectural remains of Trimul Naik. Of the three, however, Trichinopoly with its combination of interests is probably the most attractive—just beyond the town, a high conical rock rises sheer out of the plain, as that of Gibraltar out of the sea, and like Gibraltar it has been the scene of innumerable conflicts. In the days of English and French contention for the empire of India, upon that rock the fortunes of either side may be said to have turned. Every yard, almost every inch of the vicinity has been contested and recontested hand to hand and foot to foot. A smaller rock in the neighbourhood is pointed out as the landmark of one of the hottest of those encounters, the famous “Battle of the Sugar-loaf.” Flight after flight of steps and stairs, through columns and arches of grotesque carving, leads to the top of the rock of “Trichy,” surmounted by a small open pavilion-like temple, whence a magnificent view is obtained of the city at its base, and far over all the champaign round. In the foreground, the emerald island of

Seringham is seen, clasped in the silvery arms of its rivers, the Cauvery and the Coleroon, anicuttled to restrain the fervour of their embrace, while, above profuse growths of palm and bamboo, tower the gigantic pyramidal gopuras of its Saivite and its Vaishnavite Pagodas.

These early one morning I visited, under the advantageous auspices of the assistant collector. At the main entrance, we were received by two double rows of temple elephants, facing inwards and hung with jingling bells. On a signal from their mahouts, the sagacious brutes salaamed us by raising their trunks to their foreheads and loudly trumpeting. In a kind of sacristy, upon a scarlet-clothed bench, roped off from the common herd, who had assembled open-mouthed and open-eyed to enjoy the double spectacle, and arranged with chairs within the cordon for ourselves, *à l'aristocrate*, were displayed by a Brahmin the sacred vessels and utensils for the service of the temple, and the vestments and armour of the gods—vast round bowls, goblets, and salvers, of dull

massy gold without alloy, together with cuirasses, back-plates, vambraces, greaves, helms and hauberts of the same precious metal, bossed and studded all over with emeralds, amethysts, and sapphires, in the rough—a barbaric manifestation of riches, worthy the fabled wealth of Ormus and of Ind, and allowing me for once to feel that after all “the gorgeous East” was not “a gorgeous delusion.” Meanwhile, as the show proceeded, some of the dancing girls of the temple entertained us with a Nautch to the tom-tom accompaniment of their male attendants. These ladies, called *Dasis*, are married to the idols of the Pagoda; and Nelson, in his work on the Collectorate of Madura, remarks concerning them, that, “judging from appearances, their stony husbands would seem to be by no means incapable of performing the most important of marital duties.”

Of the effect produced by the architecture of the Pagodas themselves it is impossible to convey the suggestion of an idea. In general plan and design they are all very much alike, varying

chiefly in matters of detail. To the airy gracefulness of the Mahomedan mosque with swelling dome and slender minarets they make no claim, but in extent and stupendousness comparison is all in their favour. In mere size there is nothing else like them in India or indeed in the world, excepting Egypt, which alone can point to such masses of masonry, while in magnitude and elaboration combined they stand unparalleled. Their invariable arrangement is that of a series of concentric rectangular enclosures, the outermost walls of which in some cases measure as much as nine hundred yards in length. In the middle of each of the sides of these courtyards rise aloft vast pyramid-shaped gateways. These are the gopuras, and form one of the most striking features of these temples, some of which have as many as sixteen of them, the larger ones bulking up to two hundred feet in height, one hundred and thirty in breadth, and a hundred in depth. They are formed in diminishing tiers, of which there are some ten or a dozen, and terminate in an oblong

casket-shaped dome-top. From base to summit they are encrusted all over with a congeries of the most grotesque figures, compounds of man and beast, many being covered with a distemper of glaring primary colours, and some further ornamented by frescoes, whose subjects reach the utmost bounds of brightly tinted obscenity. Another characteristic, not inferior even to the gopurams, are the choultries or thousand-pillared halls for celebrating the espousals of the gods and goddesses, standing amidst the rows of columns of which one appears to be amongst the glades and alleys of a petrified forest. Each pillar is a separate study in itself, each elaborately sculptured from base to capital, and each differing in conception one from another, taking the shape of "gorgons, hydras, and chimæras dire," of monsters, like the cyclopean Polyphemus, horrible, formless, huge, bereft of sight, rampant, with pointed claw and bristling mane and flaming nostril, a recurring and favourite device being that of a large-bosomed female with leg thrown up in air overhead, in the style of Rigolboche or

la Reine Pomare,—in short, whatever of fantastic the Hindoo mind, imbued with its morose but figurative superstitions, could conjure up, and the patient cunning of the Indian hand could execute. Stationed in the centre of the courts is the Adytum, named Vimana, a square shrine almost uniformly insignificant in size and height, and the least conspicuous feature of those enormous structures. At one of the temples, I forget where, I had observed an unfinished gopura not extending beyond the basement course. Its incompleteness I heard accounted for, I cannot say with what truth, on the ground that, according to Hindoo ideas, finality is unscientific, for the extremely philosophical reason that nothing can remain stationary at perfection, but must be either approaching to or receding from that state. Perfect in no sense of the word can these vast fabrics be considered, for with the exception of the Shiva Pagoda at Tanjore, by reason of its balance and symmetry the noblest temple of the south, and one of the most imposing architectural monuments in the

world, instead of synthetically leading up to a whole, they lead analytically down to a part, nowhere affording a *coup d'œil*, yet notwithstanding that blemish, grave as it is, the Pagodas of Southern India in their combined vastness and elaboration are among the greatest wonders of this wondrous land.

I have now been eighteen months in India, and am leaving its shores, having traversed it in its length and breadth from "the Iron Gate" to Cape Kumari, and from the coasts of Malabar to those of Coromandel. As the memory, quickened by parting, comes back to me of all the places where I have been, and of all the things that I have seen, what a dream of Arabian Nights does it not appear—a medley, in which are blended palm-groves and snowy summits, broad streams and teeming ghauts, vast cities thronged with turbaned men and veiled women, Moslem domes of floating marble, and the sculptured arcades of Hindoo fanes? Many an alien land and many strange peoples shall I visit, yet none, and for an Englishman in especial, with an

interest like that of India, that marvellous region which within its limits comprises not one country, but fifty, not one people, but a hundred. And what a yet stranger than any vision of Arabian Nights seems the story of British Empire in the East,—how that a company of traders, with no thoughts above the huckstering of piece-goods and of shellac, from a few acres of factory about Fort George, Fort William, and Surat should “*paulatim*,” like their own armorial tortoise, have extended their dominions over the surface of the peninsula, till finally British sovereignty is acknowledged from the Pass of Khyber to the Straits of Manar; and that thus to a nation of shopkeepers it should have been given to realise a dream whose fulfilment was denied to Alexander and to Cyrus, and to a people so prosaic as to be aptly personified by a type so common-place as John Bull, to become successors to more than all the glories of the House of Tamerlane. At first, no doubt, in harmony with such commercial antecedents, India was regarded as a milch cow or a

pagoda tree, to be drained or devoured, till, like a flaccid bloodsucker, the Nabob dropped off to be the scorn and butt of his countrymen at home from his wealth, his ostentation, and his vulgarity. All that, however, is long since changed. Doubtless the milch cow is run dry, and the pagoda tree stricken with the sterility of the *figus religiosa*. Still for long years has been, and increasingly day by day is honestly recognised and devotedly attempted to be discharged a higher conception of duty toward India than that of self-aggrandisement. That efforts meet with such incommensurate result, must be ascribed to the immensity, if not the impossibility, of the task, and to faults of want of sympathy that, to say the least, are as much on the side of the governed as of their governors. This much at any rate may be safely averred, that no other nation of the world could have succeeded where we have failed, and that least of all would the native have fared better under his own régime. We have put down Suttee, Thugee, and Dacoity;

we have constructed canals, spanned rivers, and intersected the country with the iron road; we have created the great mercantile emporia of Calcutta and Bombay;—monuments of our rule, when our Raj shall disappear, at least as favourable as the *Regiæ Moles* of the Great Moguls. But after all is said, does it amount to more than the assertion that the viaduct and the girder bridge have superseded the old heap of champagne bottles? In any higher and moral sense have we elevated, have we even touched, the inner life of the people? Is the material well-being even of the countless millions of the tillers of the soil in any particular one whit better, is it not alleged to be in some respects even worse than when first we came amongst them, so that, in some degree, the memorable words of Burke remain true as when they were spoken, “that were we to be driven out of India to-day, nothing would remain to tell that it had been possessed, during the period of our dominion, by anything better than the ourang-outang and the tiger?”

Such were the thoughts and speculations which, without an attempt on my part to solve them, floated through my brain as the steamer on whose deck I stood headed out to sea, while, pointing me to another hemisphere, Southern Cross and clouds of Magellan rose in the tropic sky, and the palm-fringed shores of India, with all its hopes and aspirations, faded for ever from my view.

FINIS.

NOTE.

THE Hindustani words and phrases introduced into these pages make no pretensions to any sort of correctness, or to be other than examples of that debased jargon, a smattering of which the merest passer through the country could not, if he would, avoid picking up. The spelling I have adopted in transcribing them is, as Artemus Ward would say, fonetic. As regards the orthography of proper names, usage admits of a wide choice, for instance, as in the following word, which may be indifferently written Mysore, Mysoor, Máisúr, or Mahéswar. Of this licence I have freely availed myself to indulge in the delightful luxury of inconsistency, employing any mode that first presented itself at the point of my pen. One thing, however, I have been sedulous to eschew—that pedagogic transliteration, that transmogrifies such familiar words as Delhi, Lucknow, Cawnpore into such unknown quantities as Dihilí, Lakhnao, Kánhpúr. I make this avowal *pace* a certain eccentric heterographist and astrologist, who elaborated a disquisition to demonstrate that famines in Madras produced spots in the sun, or spots in the sun produced famines in Madras, I forget which, but it does not much matter, as the argument is equally cogent to support either hypothesis.

